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“It’s not that big of a problem...so we’re not going to do anything.” An inclusive grounded theory study exploring the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents in school for their emotional well-being.

"It's not that big of a problem...so we're not going to do anything."

An inclusive grounded theory study exploring the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents in school for their emotional well-being.

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Abstract

This inclusive study aimed to explore what helps and hinders adolescent help-seeking in school for their emotional well-being. With the increasing prevalence of mental health conditions in children and young people in the UK (Green et al, 2004; Children's Society, 2008) and with young people spending a significant amount of their time in educational settings (King, Strunk and Sorter, 2010; Anderson and Graham, 2016; Rutter et al, 1979; Dryfoos, 1994), this research aimed to identify what could promote adolescents seeking help from adults in school.

In order to gain the views of the young people, an inclusive research approach was adopted for this study using a grounded theory methodology. Pupil researchers were trained to lead focus groups within three participating schools and provide feedback on the data analysis. Supplementary data was collected through interviews with the school SENCOs and relevant school policies. A thematic analysis of this data took place to identify the gaps between the differing perspectives.

The findings suggest that young people go through a complex and internal decision-making process regarding whether to seek help from adults in school for problems which cause them emotional distress. The key overarching theoretical categories included: positive relationships, 'the inbetweeners', containing overwhelming feelings and protecting image. The findings also identify a need for schools to explicitly teach young people the skills they require to seek help effectively; which aims to lead to the development of healthy help-seeking behaviours and may promote future help-seeking.

Comparing the views of the young people with the supplementary data drew out the key differences between what is important to them, when seeking help, and what support the schools are currently providing. These findings therefore highlight the importance of gaining the views of young people and involving them in research. Implications for schools and Educational Psychologists are also identified in terms of listening and responding to the young people's views as being central to promoting help-seeking.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work carried out in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award.

Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work.

Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:……. DATE:……..

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction overview

This study contributes to the current body of literature which explores the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents from adults in school to support their emotional well-being needs. This study promotes the importance of hearing the views of children and young people (CYP) which has also been advocated within legislation (Corsaro, 2005; United Nations, 1989; the Children Act, 1989; DfE, 1994; DfE/DoH, 2015). It therefore adopts an inclusive research approach and uses a grounded theory methodology to gain a deeper understanding of what helps and hinders this type of help-seeking in school from the perspectives of the young people (YP) themselves. Within three participating secondary schools, the study used focus groups with YP aged 11-14 to gather data and supplemented this with data from semi-structured interviews with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and by undertaking an analysis of the school policies.

This chapter starts by providing definitions of some of the key terms used throughout this dissertation. It then considers the research context and relevance to the field of Educational Psychology. It will also state my personal interest in the research area and therefore my prior knowledge and preconceptions will be identified. Crucially, this chapter provides the rationale for using an inclusive research approach and identifies the core aims and potential benefits of carrying out the study in this way. Finally, the aims of the research will be discussed as well as how the following chapters in this dissertation are structured.

This piece of research was carried out as part of my 3-year doctoral training in Educational Psychology at the University of Bristol in England. I am currently on professional placement within a Local Authority (LA) in the South West of England. The participating schools in this study are also from this LA.

1.2 Key definitions

This section defines some of the key terms used throughout this research to ensure the reader is clear about how I am using them.

1.2.1 Inclusive research

Throughout this dissertation, I have chosen to use the term 'inclusive research' to describe how I viewed the YP's involvement in this study. Inclusive research is still a relatively new term used to describe research with participants but is most widely known within childhood and disability studies (Nind, 2014). Nind (2014) points out that inclusive research focuses on collaboration in research rather than research 'on' participants and acknowledges that those being researched have knowledge that can lead to social transformation. Nind (2014) also suggests that it is in line with the move from the medical model of disability to a more social model whereby research can identify and gain a clearer understanding of environmental and social barriers to participation as well as the topic being studied. It also helps to address the associated power relations between the researcher and participants that is often a criticism of qualitative forms of research.

1.2.2 Mental health

Mental health is considered a broad term which encompasses well-being and the wide range of factors that impact upon it (Government Office for London, 2007). Throughout my background reading, I was drawn to The World Health Organization's (WHO) (2014) definition of mental health:

> Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (WHO, 2014).

Although there are varying definitions of this term, the one above views mental health as a positive, rather than negative, concept.

1.2.3 Emotional well-being

The World Health Organization (2005) defines 'well-being' as:

> Fundamental to the quality of life and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, enabling people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative and active citizens (WHO, 2005).

However, many authors suggest that 'well-being' as a distinct concept has not been clearly defined in the literature (Griffiths and Cooper, 2005; McAuley and Rose, 2010). Different disciplines have used varying definitions of the term (Camfield, Streuli, and Woodhead, 2009; Gillet-Swan, 2014) and its meaning has been quite fluid (Fattore, Mason, and Watson, 2007) due to its subjective nature (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). CYP define well-being in school in a range of ways however, Anderson and Graham (2016) found that it was primarily around being asked about issues, being listened to, being respected and having their rights fulfilled.

Terms such as 'emotional well-being' and 'mental health' are often used interchangeably by professionals working within children's services (Government Office for London, 2007). The Government Office for London (2007) suggests that there are no defined differences within these terms however, within the education system the use of the term 'emotional well-being' is preferred over terms like 'mental health' as they are more in line with a social model of disability as opposed to a more deficit model of CYP's needs and therefore acknowledges the role of society in creating barriers leading to disability (Oliver, 1996; Crisp, 2000).

From a positive psychological perspective, Seligman's (2011) PERMA model suggests that humans need five key elements for psychological well-being and happiness. These include: **P**ositive emotions, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, **M**eaning and **A**ccomplishments. The positive emotions element focuses on developing skills for an optimistic outlook on life and

resilience to coping with negative emotions (Seligman, 2011). This suggests that emotional well-being is one, of several, important aspects of overall well-being and happiness.

Furthermore, the Community Translational Science Team (CTST) (2016) define emotional well-being as "an overall positive state of one's emotions, life satisfactions, sense of meaning and purpose, and ability to pursue self-defined goals" (CTST, 2016 in Roundtable meeting report, 2018, p. 2). In line with the positive emotions element of Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of psychological well-being, the term 'emotional well-being' throughout this dissertation will be used to mean: having the resilience and coping mechanisms to cope with negative emotions. In order to avoid any confusion around terms, and to attract a range of readers, I will use the term 'mental health and emotional well-being' throughout this research.

1.2.4 Adolescence

Adolescence is a stage of development between the approximate ages of 12-24 years which brings with it both challenges and benefits as a result of changes in brain structure (Siegal, 2014). Erikson (1968) saw adolescence as a key period of life where identity formation occurs through the development of self-concept. Therefore adolescents are subject to a great deal of physical and emotional upheaval (Kennedy, 2011). Throughout this dissertation, adolescents will also be referred to as young people (YP).

1.2.5 Help-seeking

Throughout this study I refer to YP help-seeking or seeking help for their emotional well-being. These terms refer to the YP's behaviours which aim to lead to assistance from adults. Rickwood, Deane, Wilson and Ciarrochi (2005) describe help-seeking as a coping strategy which aims to communicate distress to others in the hope that they receive support in a range of forms. Help-seeking is also dependent on relationships and interpersonal skills (Rickwood et al, 2005).

1.2.6 Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

As stated in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice, the role of SENCOs in schools is to identify and ensure that the Special Educational Needs (SEN) needs of individual CYP are met (DfE/DoH, 2015). This includes CYP's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

1.3 Listening to the views of children and young people in school

The promotion of children's rights in their education has led to the shift in hearing the voices of CYP (Corsaro, 2005). Throughout relevant legislation, which aims to protect the rights of CYP and their families (DfE/DoH, 2015; Children and Families Act, 2014), there has been an increasing priority to listen to the views of CYP and involve them in decision making. This, and the benefits named below, prompted my decision to use an inclusive research approach in this study.

Research has shown us that there are a range of benefits to hearing the views of CYP, these include: empowering CYP which promotes agency (Zimmerman, 2008); it encourages the development of metacognition (Alexander et al, 2010; Zimmerman, 2008) including the ability to become more reflective and independent (Fisher, 2014); it shows CYP that they are respected as people (Edmonds, 2013) and therefore are seen as active members of their community and society (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000); it can impact positively on academic outcomes and relationships (Fielding 2001; Flutter, 2007); and has been found to have a positive impact on well-being (Anderson and Graham, 2016).

Many schools use forums such as school councils to elicit the views of CYP however, CYP's participation in schools has been criticised for being too tokenistic and only allowing CYP contribute to 'safe' issues and decisions (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000). This has been found to frustrate CYP as they often feel like adults do not listen to them in school when they think their views are being gathered in a tokenistic way (Anderson and Graham, 2016).

1.4 Research context and relevance to Educational Psychology

As the mental health of adolescents is of growing concern in the UK (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford and Goodman, 2004; Children's Society, 2008), schools, and school staff, are well placed and expected to provide emotional well-being support to prevent the onset of mental health conditions in YP (DfE, 2018). Schools are also often managing the behavioural consequences of poor mental health in their students (DfE, 2018). Consequently, they are expected to have information within their school policies around how they promote positive mental health and well-being however, it is currently not a statutory requirement to have a standalone policy around this (DfE, 2018).

A huge aspect of the Educational Psychologist (EP) role is around gaining the views of CYP, and research highlights the skills of EPs in eliciting these views (Norwich, Kelly and Educational Psychologists in Training, 2006). EPs recognise that CYP have alternative views to the adults around them; therefore by understanding their perspective, adults can develop more informed interventions which can lead to better outcomes (Edmonds, 2013).

The findings from this research aim to inform EP practice in terms of how they can work with schools to address the barriers to adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being. It will also help EPs to promote the facilitating factors and ensure that schools are providing effective early intervention in line with research and documents produced by Government bodies (Department of Health, 2015; Frith, 2017; Government Office for London, 2007). The current level of pastoral support in place within schools today along with the ever-rising prevalence of mental health disorders in CYP led me to consider why this is the case.

1.5 Professional background and journey towards research topic

Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999) highlight the importance of the researcher explicitly stating their theoretical perspective, values and reasons for being interested in a particular topic.

My interest in this area stemmed originally from one of my previous roles in education as a learning mentor. Throughout my time in this role, I provided pastoral support and delivered social and emotional interventions to CYP who were experiencing emotional distress or were identified as having difficulties in regulating their emotions. This involved providing a 'drop-in' service for students to access emotional support; this service relied upon CYP seeking help themselves. I was fascinated by why some YP chose to seek help from a specific person depending upon the problem they were seeking help for. Since this role and my subsequent educational psychology training and placements, I have continued to be interested in the help-seeking behaviours of CYP in school and often considered what the barriers and facilitators to this might be.

Within my placement opportunities whilst training, I recognised that the majority of work undertaken by Educational Psychologists (EPs) in schools is around the SEMH needs of CYP. Often, this involvement occurs when a CYP's needs have become a significant cause of concern. This has led me to wonder whether they have, or why they have not, received early intervention or sought help for their difficulties before. I felt as though CYP would have a strong opinion regarding this and would have both positive and negative experiences of times they have sought emotional support from adults in school.

My preconceived assumptions were that there were likely to be personality traits and characteristics of some adults which might be causing a barrier to help-seeking or have led to CYP having negative experiences when they have sought help from an adult in school. Equally I speculated that there is a lack of empathy for adolescents' emotional needs and therefore a training implication for staff in school in order to be able to provide this support effectively. These assumptions shaped my initial research topic and research questions.

1.6 Aims of the research

The aims of this research were to look more closely at the facilitating and inhibiting factors to adolescents seeking help from adults in school for their emotional well-being, from the perspectives of the YP themselves. The study aimed to supplement this primary data with information from the school SENCOs and school policies in order to identify the gaps

between what schools are currently doing and have in place, and what the YP want and feel would support them further.

There have been no previous studies which have specifically considered these barriers and facilitators to adolescent help-seeking in school for their emotional well-being and more specifically, no inclusive research in this area. This study primarily aims to understand the complexities around adolescent help-seeking behaviours when they experience emotional distress. This intended to identify some considerations and possible next steps for schools and potentially contribute to a new school policy around how the school can support emotional well-being.

1.7 Structure of thesis

The following chapter considers the existing literature in the research area. It first clarifies the aims and gives a summary of how the systematic literature review was carried out. The context of the research is discussed in more detail before critiquing some of the key literature. Finally the research aims and original research questions for the study are outlined.

Chapter 3 details the methodological approach adopted for this study. It includes details of the research paradigm and the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions. The methodological rationale is explained in terms of why an inclusive research approach was used before explaining grounded theory. It details the methods used in gathering the data together with how all of the data was analysed. Key ethical considerations are discussed throughout this chapter.

The findings are presented in chapter 4 of this dissertation. First, it presents the findings from the focus groups. The main themes are then drawn out of the supplementary data from the SENCO interviews and analysis of school policies.

Chapter 5 explores and discusses the findings of this study further in relation to the previous research. The data from the SENCO interviews and school policies are discussed in terms of

how they differ from one another, and from the perspectives of the YP. The next steps for schools and EPs are discussed as well as the strengths and limitations of the study.

The conclusions drawn from this study are highlighted in chapter 6.

2. The literature review

2.1 Introduction and aims

This chapter aims to present the literature around CYP's help-seeking behaviours in school to support their emotional well-being in order to situate the current study and identify the gaps in the research that this study partly aims to address. The chapter will first give a summary of how my literature review was carried out followed by exploring the current context in relation to the topic. It will then start by discussing the role of schools in supporting CYP's emotional well-being before exploring what we already know about the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents. It then moves onto critique the literature around how help-seeking can be encouraged. Finally, the literature review will consider the role of positive student-teacher relationships in the promotion of positive mental health and emotional well-being for CYP in schools, as this was a prominent finding in the literature. Finally this review will present the rationale for the current study, research aims and questions.

2.2 Systematic literature review

A systematic literature review was carried out to ensure that the most recent and relevant research and evidence was reviewed. Five searches were carried out using alternative terms through five databases: British Education Index, ERIC, Teacher Reference Center, Education Abstracts and PsycINFO. The main searches used the terms: pupil or student or adolescen* or children or young people, emotional support or well-being, seeking help or help seeking and school staff or school-based adults or helper; abstracts were then read and filtered by relevance. Articles were excluded from the review if they focused on the following:

- academic help-seeking behaviours
- those in other countries with significantly different cultures e.g. Israeli young people whose mental health is impacted by threats of terror
- papers which looked at the help-seeking behaviours of university students
- those where participants had specific and diagnosed mental health disorders .

British Education Index	ERIC	Teacher Reference Center	Education Abstracts	PsycINFO	Total
29 relevant (out of 245)	32 relevant (out of 284)	24 relevant (out of 328)	20 relevant (out of 124)	34 relevant (out of 202)	**139 relevant (out of 1,183)**

These 139 articles were then read in full. For full details of the systematic literature review please refer to Appendix 2. It is worth noting at this point that throughout the systematic review on this topic, no studies were found to collaborate with YP to the inclusive level of the current study.

2.3 Current context

The well-being of CYP has become of interest to social and political agendas in recent years (Amerijckx and Humblet, 2014). This is partly due to research findings over the last few decades that suggests that emotional difficulties in CYP can lead to negative academic outcomes (Hecht, Inderbitzen and Bukowski, 1998; Laukkanen, Shemeikka, Notkola, Koivumaa-Honkanen and Nissinen, 2002) and poor emotional well-being and mental health (Government Office for London, 2007). Consequently, the well-being of CYP can impact their lives well into adulthood (Gibbons and Silva, 2011; Heckman, Stixrud and Urzua, 2006; Phinney, 1996). Furthermore, positive emotional well-being has been found to be a facilitating factor for academic progress and engagement in primary and secondary school students (Gutman and Vorhaus, 2012). However, YP have reported that many things can have a negative impact on their emotional well-being (Harden, Rees, Shepherd, Brunton, Oliver and Oakley, 2001). These influencing factors will be discussed further later in this chapter however, this highlights the importance of understanding the perspectives of YP around this topic.

2.3.1 The views of children and young people

Given that the current study has adopted an inclusive approach, it is important to ground this decision in the literature. Anderson and Graham (2016) considered the importance of CYP having a say in relation to their well-being in school. Using a mixed methods approach,

they carried out a large study to further understand the link between student voice and well-being from both the perspective of CYP and staff. CYP have reported that when their views are gathered in a tokenistic way, this has a negative impact on their well-being and leads them to not want to engage in future decision-making (Anderson and Graham, 2016). In contrast to more tokenistic methods to gather YP's views, such as student council meetings, previous research has shown that taking part in a focus group made CYP feel safe, empowered and respected (Anderson and Graham, 2016). Sadly, Anderson and Graham (2016) found that although CYP felt that focus groups would be useful in school they did not feel that staff would have the time to use them; staff were aware that they often were not able to truly listen to the views of their pupils and reported that this was due to time pressures.

When CYP have been asked for their views, the terms 'mental health' and 'mental well-being' are understood in various ways (Laidlaw, McLellan and Ozakinci, 2016). YP often associate mental health with negative connotations or stigma (Gulliver, Griffiths and Christensen, 2010) which can lead to them to fail to acknowledge the importance of maintaining a positive mental health (Armstrong et al, 2000). This could be considered concerning given the prevalence of mental health disorders in CYP which will now be discussed.

2.3.2 Prevalence of mental health disorders in CYP

Mental health difficulties in adolescents have been found to be very high (Patel et al, 2007; Green et al, 2004; Belfer, 2008; The British Medical Association, 2006). Statistics show that as many as one in ten CYP in the UK between 5-16 years of age have a mental health condition (Green et al, 2004; Children's Society, 2008). In addition, 15% of CYP in this age group have difficulties which may lead to mental health problems in the future (Brown et al, 2012). In 2018, the NHS found that as many as one in eight children and YP aged 5 to 19 years of age have a diagnosable mental disorder. These figures increase with the age of the CYP and have increased over time. Although this data is alarming, it is worth noting that most of the data gathered in this survey was from teacher reports and therefore the CYP may not have a diagnosis. Moreover, all of the statistics above incorporate behavioural and

hyperactivity disorders into their mental health data which, research shows, are often misdiagnosed in developed countries (Merten, Cwik, Margraf and Schneider, 2017). However, the prevalence of mental health problems in YP is likely to be higher than anticipated due to it often being a hidden problem (Macdonald, 2000). What we do not know is the prevalence of CYP with mental health and emotional well-being needs which do not meet the thresholds for a diagnosable condition (Government Office for London, 2007). It is thought that as few as 40% of those with a diagnosable mental health condition actually receive the professional help they need (Murphy and Fonagy, 2012).

In a review of the literature around the onset of mental health disorders by Kessler, Amminger, Sergio, Alonso, Lee and Üstün, (2007) and an article by Paus, Keshavan and Giedd, (2008) they refer to the research which shows that mental health conditions often begin to emerge during adolescence. Changes in neural structures in the brain during adolescence, which control the higher order cognitive functions, is thought to be associated with the high numbers of psychiatric disorders that often emerge (Paus, Keshavan and Giedd, 2008). Perhaps the most concerning point is that there is a wealth of research which shows that many YP do not seek help when having difficulties with their mental health (Rickwood et al, 2007; MacLean, Hunt and Sweeting, 2013; Kendal, Keeley and Callery, 2011; Schonert-Reichl, 2003; Sheffield, Fiorenza and Sofronoff, 2004; Smith, 2012). Given these concerns, it seems appropriate that schools play an important role in supporting adolescent mental health and emotional well-being needs. This will be discussed next.

2.4 The role of schools in supporting children and young people

CYP spend a lot of time in school and therefore it seems a good place to promote their emotional well-being and carry out preventative education (King, Strunk and Sorter, 2010; Anderson and Graham, 2016; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston and Smith, 1979; Dryfoos, 1994). Recent literature also suggests that schools have a vital role in providing early intervention for CYP with mental health difficulties, particularly in the current context with the difficulties in accessing specialist mental health services (Frith, 2017; Department of Health, 2015).

2.4.1 Mental health and emotional well-being policy

A number of government initiatives and documents have pointed to school's role in supporting CYP's mental health and emotional well-being (DfEE, 2001; DfES, 2004; DCSF, 2007a). Both the DfE (2018) paper 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' and The Public Health England (2015) paper 'Promoting children and YP's emotional health and well-being: A whole school and college approach' highlights the role of schools in developing resilience and recognising and promoting mental health through whole-school approaches. In order to do this, guidance and research suggests that all school staff, including school governors, should have Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to train them appropriately (DfE, 2018; Frith, 2017; Public Health England, 2015). Subsequently, secondary schools should soon receive training around mental health awareness as a result of additional funding put into CYP's mental health in the UK (DoH/DoE, 2017).

Most recently, the DfE (2018) states that schools should be a safe and supportive resource for CYP whereby they can talk to trusted adults about their problems. To do this, it suggests that schools should have effective pastoral systems in place and should provide intervention for CYP with more complex mental health needs alongside other professionals, including EPs. Processes around how schools deal with difficulties associated with CYP's mental health and emotional well-being should be documented in their policies and improvement plans (DfE, 2018; NICE, 2008). Public Health England (2015) suggest that the whole school community should be involved in developing these school policies, including CYP.

2.4.2 Promoting emotional well-being in schools

Research suggests that early mental health intervention is more effective via universal approaches delivered in schools (Government Office for London, 2007), such as through whole staff training and social emotional education which can not only prevent poor mental health but can promote positive mental health, well-being and resilience (Mustard, 2008). However, it is important to acknowledge that schools can have both positive and negative effects on the emotional health and well-being of CYP, the negative effects are often resulting from academic pressures (West and Sweeting, 2003).

School connectedness has been defined as:

> The belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals (CDCP 2009, p. 3).

It has been suggested that positive emotional well-being is linked with school connectedness and could help to prevent some mental health problems in the future (Catalano, Mazza, Harachi, Abbott, Haggerty and Fleming, 2003; Frydenberg, Care, Freeman and Chan, 2009; Shochet, Dadds, Ham and Montague, 2006; Sulkowski, Demaray and Lazarus, 2012). Furthermore, school connectedness and feeling a sense of belonging has been found to promote nurturing classrooms and helping-seeking behaviours (King, Strunk and Sorter, 2010). Although the evidence suggests that school are central to CYP's emotional well-being, this does not necessarily mean that school staff are well prepared to carry out this role.

2.4.3 Are school staff prepared for this role?

Research has found that teachers often miss signs that adolescents are suffering with mental health conditions such as depression (King, Strunk and Sorter, 2010). In 2009, Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell and Donovan suggested that schools are confused as to what they need to be doing to support CYP's emotional health and well-being and how they should be promoting it; partly due to the ambiguous terminology around mental health. They found that some school staff are perceived to be reluctant to take on this responsibility which could be because they require training to help them approach it with more confidence. Despite this, initiatives and interventions to support CYP's emotional well-being often rely on school staff to deliver them (Kidger et al, 2009) or, when necessary, refer them onto more specialist services (Department of Health and Department of Education, 2017). The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (2008) also found that school staff did not have the skills and confidence to lead on emotional well-being initiatives in schools and feel unsupported and constrained to the point that they struggle with this aspect of their role (Kemp and Reupert, 2012). This could be due to staff having to take on this responsibility on top of the expectations already placed upon them, which Finney (2006) states is a consideration the government fails to acknowledge. More recently, in 2016,

Stanbridge and Campbell suggest that with LA services being cut, more tools should be developed to equip schools to support pupils with emotional difficulties.

There is variability in the topics covered around mental health and emotional well-being in initial teacher training programmes in the UK and Australia (Shepherd et al, 2015). Furthermore, there is limited support for teachers from professionals with mental health expertise (Sharpe et al, 2016). Stanbridge and Campbell (2016) suggest that professionals may need to be indirectly supported by an EP; such as via systemic work in the form of training or supervision of staff.

In a very recent study, Shelemy, Harvey and Waite (2019) found that teachers want: training to help them identify and support the mental health needs of students in order to prevent difficulties escalating; tools which can be applied to the classroom; and wider communications and systems in school in place. All of these findings suggest that a systemic approach is likely to be most helpful. It is important to note that an identified limitation of this study was that the participating teachers were not chosen at random and therefore they could have a particular interest in CYP's mental health. Therefore, these findings may not reflect the views of all teachers in schools despite old findings which suggest that 99% of teachers understood that part of their role included catering for their students' mental health needs (Roeser and Midgley, 1997). From my professional experience, adults in school vary significantly in the importance they place on supporting the mental health needs of their students. Role confusions are also evident in schools, as discussed in the study below.

Graham, Phelps, Maddison and Fitzgerald (2011) gathered teachers' views around supporting children's mental health needs in school via a quantitative survey study in Australia. The findings suggested a conflict in teachers' understanding of their role in supporting CYP's mental health particularly given their lack of training in this area and competing priorities. The teachers also constructed mental health as a negative concept in line with a deficit model rather than understanding the importance of providing CYP with the tools and protective factors to promote positive emotional well-being (Graham et al, 2011). The authors suggest that schools should be taking a more universal approach to

supporting the mental health needs of all students as well as identifying the need for mental health awareness in initial teacher training programmes (Graham et al, 2011) as also discussed above. It is worth noting that the majority of teachers who responded to the survey were in the older age category of 41-50 years and had been teaching for 21 to 30 years. This perhaps suggests that the more recent shift to a social model of disability, universal approaches to mental health and the changing role of teachers may not have filtered through to those teachers who trained many years ago. It is likely that newly qualified teachers have a greater understanding of this aspect of their role as a result of the increasing mental health awareness education within teacher training programmes (Shepherd et al, 2015). In training school staff to support and promote pupil well-being more effectively, it is important to acknowledge that It can also have an impact on their own emotional well-being.

The expectation on schools to support the emotional well-being of their students and deliver interventions around this can add a different dimension and additional stress to their role. Both Hu, Flynn, Mann and Woodward-Kron (2017) and Kidger and colleagues (2009) consider the emotional strain that the pressure of containing the mental health and emotional well-being needs of pupils can put on staff and the impact this can have on being able to adequately support them. Kidger and colleagues (2009) carried out semi-structured interviews with school staff in UK secondary schools to gain their views on supporting students' emotional health and well-being. The authors suggest that if formal support for teachers' emotional distress is in place within schools, alongside the training they require to meet the emotional needs of their pupils, then YP will learn that seeking help and support is a normal part of society (Kidger et al, 2009). One possible limitation of this study was that those staff interviewed were all involved in emotional health and well-being work in their schools and therefore could be more enthusiastic about providing YP this type of support. Therefore, these findings may not be reflective of all school staff. Adolescent help-seeking behaviours and the various influences on this will be explored next.

2.5 Help-seeking behaviours in adolescents

Adolescence is an important developmental stage where biological, psychological and social needs are experienced (Gibson, Baker, Showalter, Al-Sarraf, Atakan et al, 1992). In the UK, there is little research into the help-seeking behaviours of YP for mental health related issues despite adolescents having a high number of mental health difficulties (Chan and Quinn, 2012). However, research has found that YP are less likely to seek help for their mental health needs than their physical health (MacLean et al, 2013).

2.5.1 Who young people seek help from

Research has found that YP turn to friends and family as their chosen helpers before seeking help elsewhere (Gibson et al, 1992; Roose and John, 2003). Friends as helpers have been found to be significant to pupil well-being; according to research, this is due to them being easier to approach and confide in (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). As well as peers, parents are often the preferred helpers for adolescents' problems (Gibson et al, 1992). Outside of family and friends, Boldero and Fallon (1995) found that YP prefer to seek help from a non-professional over a professional.

Leavey Rothi and Paul (2011) found that as few as 15% of 298 pupils from a range of countries chose to seek help from adults in school; this included teachers, school nurses and counsellors. Interestingly however, seeking help from adults in school has been found to depend on the problem or topic as Glasheen, Shochet and Campbell (2016) found that YP preferred to discuss topics such as career plans with a professional, such as a school counsellor, face-to-face. They also found that YP preferred to seek online support for more sensitive topics including concerns over their sexuality. It is thought that YP often seek help online to overcome common barriers, such as embarrassment and concerns around anonymity (Havas, Nooijer, Crutzen and Feron, 2011; Kim, Weinstein and Selman, 2015). What can be taken from these findings is that some topics feel much safer to discuss with adults in school than others. If adults have more awareness of why online help-seeking feels more comfortable for YP, then these could be applied in school to further encourage help-seeking amongst adolescents.

2.5.2 When young people seek help

Kurtz, Lindsey, Jarvis and Nackerud (2000) suggest that many of the reasons for YP opting not to seek help from informal or professional helpers could be due to YP needing to be willing and ready to accept help. They found that within homeless adolescent groups, whether they were willing to accept help depended on the timing of the help offered and whether they felt the helper was trustworthy (Kurtz et al, 2000). Kurtz and colleagues (2000) found that sometimes YP needed to make mistakes, hit a low or experience something frightening or traumatic before being ready to ask for help or know they even needed help.

Other factors such as YP's intentions behind seeking help or the regularity of an experience can also influence YP's help-seeking behaviours (Hunter, Boyle and Warden 2004; Hunter and Borg, 2006). For example, research has shown that YP were found to seek help from adults when their intention was to get a bully in trouble or when they were being bullied on a more regular basis (Hunter et al, 2004; Hunter and Borg, 2006). Bullying is just one reason why YP might seek adult help in school, the next section explores a wider range of reasons.

2.5.3 The problems young people seek help for

The full range of problems YP people seek help for are beyond the scope of this literature review however, it is useful to have an understanding of the types of problems which can impact on a CYP's emotional well-being.

Research has found that family relationships, problems with their peers, education, health and emotional and behavioural difficulties were amongst the most common causes of CYP's difficulties (the Audit Commission, 1999; Boldero and Fallon, 1995). Similarly, Gibson and colleagues (1992) found that school problems, family problems and issues around identity and self-concept were reported most often by adolescents; in line with Erikson's developmental theory (1968). However, this led me to consider whether school problems were most highly reported because it is their highest concern or because it is deemed a safe and acceptable topic to seek help for in school or discuss in a research study. This would also be in line with recent findings from Glasheen and colleagues (2016) above who found that adolescents used online forums with support for sensitive topics.

More recently, Kendal and colleagues (2011) found that some YP choose not to seek help in school for emotional difficulties due to their problems being perceived as too sensitive. This raises questions over why YP of this age feel unable to seek help for their more sensitive problems in school. Factors including age and gender can influence the problems YP seek help for, these are discussed in the following two sections.

2.5.4 The impact of gender on help-seeking

Some research has shown that both males and females aged 13-15 years tend to report the same or very similar problems (Gibson et al, 1992). However, in general, the literature shows that YP of different genders have different perspectives on help-seeking; with girls being more willing to seek help (Leavey et al, 2011).

Cluver and colleagues (2013) report that from the age of three years, girls are more likely than boys to seek help. Rickwood and colleagues (2005) thought that boys might seek help less than girls in their study due to not wanting to threaten their gender identity as a consequence of societal expectations (MacLean et al, 2013; Rickwood et al, 2005). In contrast to this, older findings (Chandra and Minkovitz, 2006) suggest that boys have less knowledge and more stigma around mental health which could explain their reluctance in seeking help. It is possible that this has shifted in recent years with the focus on promoting mental health and emotional well-being. However, concerns around gender identities and the impact this has on adolescent help-seeking have also been considered relevant in more recent research discussed below.

Although there were no significant gender differences found when looking at secondary school students' intentions to seek help from an online counselling service (Glasheen, Shochet and Campbell, 2016), within the sample, half of the girls had accessed face-to-face counselling before whereas only a quarter of the boys had. It was hypothesised that this could be related to societal expectations and views of masculinity (Glasheen et al, 2016). Similar to MacLean and colleagues (2013) findings around threatening gender identities, Addis and Mahalik (2003) suggest that men, who also seek help less than women, could be

less forthcoming in seeking help from any source due to cultural values around what they perceive to be masculine. It is therefore unsurprising that in a study by Chan and Quinn (2012), young males felt that counselling showed a weakness and this inhibited their help-seeking. However, the same study conflicts with previous findings as it also showed that females were more sceptical about the school-based counselling than males were, and felt that it might make things worse, making self-reliance a more preferable coping strategy. The authors wonder whether this scepticism was related to the female's understanding of what counselling is and suggest that this would be worthy of future research. Alternatively, as more girls have received counselling than boys, this scepticism could be due to a past experience of counselling.

Boys being less willing to seek help than girls for their mental health and emotional well-being is a concern given that research (Green et al, 2004) suggests that boys between 11-16 years are statistically more likely than girls to have a diagnosable mental health condition. However, the relationship between gender and help-seeking is complex and, as shown above, the research findings are inconsistent.

2.5.5 The impact of age on help-seeking

The types of problems YP experience also vary according to their age. Boldero and Fallon (1995) found that younger school-aged children between 11-15 years old tended to report more problems associated with their family whereas older school-aged children around 16-18 years report problems around their interpersonal relationships with peers. The authors suggest that this could be due to their emerging independence and spending more time away from their families and with their peers (Beinstein and Lane, 1991). Boldero and Fallon (1995) also found that older YP saw their problems as more serious than younger adolescents and took more responsibility for them; the authors believed that their increasing independence at this age could explain this finding as they were comparing their problems to that of their peers.

At the adolescent stage of development, Erik Erikson (1968) highlighted that YP are grappling with sexual drives and developing their identity and self-concept. Throughout this

period, recognition from peers becomes very important to adolescents as well as shifting their dependency from their parents to their peers (Erikson, 1968). Although Erikson does not explicitly discuss the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents, his account of how adolescents form their identity and self-concept may explain some of the differences in problems and help-seeking behaviours of adolescents and why they change throughout this stage of development.

Furthermore, Casey, Jones and Hare (2008) carried out a review looking at the development of the adolescent brain. They concluded that, as a result of adolescents' limbic system being more mature than the prefrontal cortex, although adolescents are capable of making rational and informed choices and decisions, they have limited impulse control in situations which are more emotionally charged; consequently, this can impact their decision to seek help. This is in line with the findings of Dumontheil (2016) who found that adolescents' decision-making is influenced by their sensitivity to social exclusion and highly emotionally reactive state. Therefore, decision-making can be based upon emotional or social factors due to adolescents having an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex which is involved in higher order processes; including decision-making (Blakemore and Robbins, 2012). These changes within the adolescent brain are likely to also impact on their help-seeking behaviours, particularly around their emotions which is considered next.

2.5.6 The impact of emotions on adolescent help-seeking

Research has shown that the likelihood of whether an adolescent will seek help for a problem or not can depend on the type of emotion they are feeling. For help-seeking around school bullying, Hunter and Borg (2006) carried out a quantitative study using questionnaires with 6,282 Maltese school-aged children aged between 9-14 years. These questionnaires were based on a questionnaire previously developed by researchers in the field. They were comprehensive and asked the YP to comment on incidences of bullying, the emotion elicited and their behavioural response to the bullying. The findings suggest that the more negative the emotion the experience induced, the more likely YP would seek help from their social groups. Furthermore, they found that feelings of anger led YP to seek help from both social groups and adults, and feeling 'vengeful' led to seeking help in order to

manage these feelings in a non-aggressive way (Hunter and Borg, 2006). When feeling self-pity, YP turned to an adult or trusted friend as it is seen as a personal and sensitive emotion. YP who do not seek help are thought to either not care about the bullying or feel helpless (Hunter and Borg, 2006). The authors identify that this requires further investigation as there must be distinct differences in YP who feel helpless, either in their feelings or what they perceive will be the outcome of seeking help. The authors suggest that a possible explanation for when YP appear to not care about bullying, could be a coping strategy to protect themselves from the upset that the bullying is causing them. Despite this finding, Hunter and Borg (2006) also found that helplessness can sometimes lead to YP seeking help from adults and friends.

Hunter and Borg's (2006) study is particularly interesting as it links the YP's emotion, as a result of being bullied, to their likelihood of seeking help and the type of help they seek. A key limitation of this study is the ambiguous way that emotions can be understood by individuals, one YP's understanding of feeling helpless could be completely different to anothers. Additionally, prior to completing the questionnaire about their own experiences of bullying, the YP were given stories with a description about bullying which highlighted the seriousness of being bullied and that it should be reported to school staff. This information could have influenced the YP's responses in the questionnaire and led more YP to report to seek help. If this was the case, the number of YP who reported to 'do nothing' about bullying could be considerably higher.

More recently, research has found that as distress increased in YP, so did their intention to seek help via an online counselling service (Glasheen et al, 2016). However, this finding contrasts with the help-negation effect around suicidal thoughts as discussed by Rickwood and colleagues (2005) which suggests that as psychological distress increases, so does a person's intentions of self-destruction and therefore their intention to seek help decreases. This is alarming given headlines which suggest that suicide rates among YP are on the rise (The Guardian, 2018).

Other reasons that YP may not seek help for their problems could be associated with factors such as their level of emotional competence (Ciarrochi, Deane, Wilson and Rickwood, 2002). Ciarrochi and Deane (2001) confirmed their hypothesis that in adolescents between the ages of 16-18, the higher emotional competence, the higher the intention to seek help was. They did not identify differences between genders. Consequently, those with lower emotional competence had less intention to seek help (Ciarrochi and Deane, 2001). The authors suggest that these YP may feel embarrassed about not being able to manage their emotions independently. In sum, factors including YP's emotional competence as well as the type and strength of emotion felt by YP can significantly impact on their help-seeking behaviours.

2.5.7 The impact of stigma on help-seeking

Chan and Quinn (2012) used a mixed methods study to look at the factors inhibiting secondary school students from seeking school-based counselling. The main inhibitors found were diffidence, described as lack of confidence, and self-reliance. In the study, diffidence was partly due to the stigma of mental health and seeking help for these needs through counselling (Chan and Quinn, 2012). Stigma has been found to be a common barrier for YP seeking help for their emotional well-being and mental health needs (Gulliver et al, 2010; MacLean et al, 2013). MacLean and colleagues (2013) indicate that education around mental health may help to reduce the stigma attached to seeking support for these difficulties. Amongst university students, personal stigma and views about mental health, rather than public stigma, is more likely to inhibit help-seeking (Lally, O'Conghaile, Quigley, Bainbridge and McDonald, 2013). These studies really highlight stigma as a key barrier to YP seeking help in terms of what others will think of them. Gulliver and colleagues (2010) found that embarrassment was a key factor in YP's help-seeking preferences. However, these studies do not consider the possible different understandings of what 'stigma' means to different groups of YP and what aspect of stigma they are most concerned about. This is important to establish in order to prevent YP from not seeking help.

2.5.8 When young people choose not to seek help

There are a range of reasons why YP often do not seek help for their emotional well-being, some of these have been discussed above. Gibson and colleagues (1992) carried out a large study to compare problems, coping strategies and help-seeking amongst adolescents across 17 countries. Although this is an old article, with data collected in 1989, they found individual problem-solving to be the most prominent coping strategy for YP across cultures and socioeconomic status (Gibson et al, 1992). This highlights YP's desire to be active agents in their own lives as suggested in a later study by Gulliver and colleagues (2010). At the extreme end of the spectrum, when YP feel suicidal, Gould and colleagues (2004) found that harmful or 'maladaptive' coping strategies are used, such as isolation or drug-taking, rather than seeking help. In Gibson and colleagues (1992) study, adolescents did not mention using strategies such as antisocial behaviour to cope with their problems, this could be due to the YP not using these types of coping strategies or could be through fear of getting into trouble.

Alternatively, in cases of extreme emotional distress, YP's fears of hospitalisation (Cigularov et al, 2008), their expectations about what might happen (Simoni et al, 1991) and fear of psychological treatment (Kushner and Sher, 1989) prevent them from seeking help. This might also indicate that YP require education around what help-seeking involves and what the outcomes of help-seeking are likely to be in order to overcome these barriers. The research around how YP can be encouraged to seek help for their emotional well-being is explored next.

2.6 Encouraging CYP to seek help for their emotional well-being

There has been little research into YP's help-seeking behaviours in the school context, and how YP can be further encouraged to seek help (Joyce and Weibelzahl, 2011; Gulliver et al, 2010). Research has found that by encouraging and supporting help-seeking in school by having systems in place to ensure that YP can report problems safely can increase pupil resilience (Aldridge et al, 2015). Furthermore, in terms of learning, help-seeking in students has also been found to scaffold their competency in being able to manage difficulties independently in future (Järvelä, 2011).

2.6.1 The importance of asking young people their views on this topic

There are very few research papers which gain the perspectives of YP around the professionals they are encouraged to seek help from (Freake, Barley and Kent, 2007). Moreover, most of this research has focused on YP's views of professionals in a medical setting. Glasheen, Shochet and Campbell (2016) suggest that there is a need to establish ways that YP feel most comfortable to seek help; this is particularly important considering that help-seeking increases YP's mental health and emotional literacy knowledge (Gulliver and colleagues, 2010).

Kurtz and colleagues (2000) suggest that YP should be asked what has been helpful and unhelpful when they have sought help from a professional; rather than professionals working on the assumption that YP have the same views as adults or younger children. We know that YP's problems will relate to their stage of development (Gibson et al, 1992). We also know that their stage of development is likely to impact on the way they seek help and what they find most helpful and unhelpful when they do so; further highlighting the importance of gaining their views. Moreover, due to their developmental stage, Piersma (1987) suggests that adolescents are more willing to be critical of services than adults or younger children; suggesting that their responses will provide researchers with some helpful insights. Finally, acquiring this knowledge from YP could assist with issues such as appointing staff in schools (Fielding, 2006) and it could also lead to individual professionals enhancing their own practice to better meet the expectations and needs of the YP they work with (Buston, 2002; Morgan, 2000).

2.6.2 Previous experiences

In order to encourage YP to seek support in the future for their mental health and emotional well-being, the Department of Health (2004) stressed the importance of YP having positive experiences when seeking help from professionals. More recently, in a systematic review of 22 studies around the perceived barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking in YP, Gulliver and colleagues (2010) found that the most common facilitator was a previous positive experience of seeking help from a professional. When seeking support from

General Practitioners (GPs), Corry and Leavey (2017) found that a person-centred approach to YP's care around their emotional and psychological well-being is required whereby they are listened to, respected and whereby GPs have an awareness and knowledge about common adolescent problems and show a genuine understanding of these. They found that if YP had had negative experiences and emotions elicited during a previous visit to their GP then they were less likely to engage with them.

Research by Buston (2002) looked at the experiences of adolescents using mental health services and aimed to improve the services, increase attendance and hoped that, as a result, adolescents would be more likely to use the services in the future if necessary. Using a grounded theory methodology they carried out semi-structured interviews and self-image questionnaires. On the whole they found that YP had more negative experiences than positive ones when they had previously sought mental health help. The primary theme discussed in the interviews were related to the doctor-patient relationship (Buston, 2002). A possible limitation of this study was that it ruled out YP who had previously used mental health services by only focusing on those currently accessing these services. The views of these YP could have been significantly different due to their current emotional state. However, given the findings above, ensuring that YP have positive experiences when they seek help for their mental health and emotional well-being appears crucial in being able to encourage further help-seeking. What adults need to be aware of, is what makes an experience a positive one. The following discussion will shed some light on what YP want when they seek help from adults.

2.6.3 What young people want in helpers

Although school and school staff appear well placed to support CYP with their emotional well-being and mental health, YP have identified a wide range of barriers to seeking help from adults. YP have identified that they want helpers to have time for them (Kurtz et al, 2000), be available and accessible (Alderman et al, 1993; Hodgson et al, 1986; Hu et al, 2017). These qualities suggest organisational barriers to help-seeking; this was also suggested in a key study by Lindsey and Kalafat (1998).

Lindsey and Kalafat (1998) carried out focus groups with 14-15 year olds in America to gain their views around their preferred helper characteristics and what they perceive to be the barriers to seeking help from school-based adults in relation to personal problems. There were a total of 6 focus groups which were divided by gender. Participants were from 4 high schools each offering different support services to their students. This study used some inclusive approaches by involving the YP in the data analysis process. They aimed to identify how help-seeking could be facilitated through the organisation of school and accessibility of staff. The final categories agreed by the researchers and participants were sorted into 'preferences for characteristics of school-based helpers', such as, knowledgeable and relates to teens, and 'barriers to help-seeking from school-based adults', for example, active negativity, which was students perception of adults based upon their personal experiences of these adults or things they have heard from others about them, and non-helpful responses, such as exaggerating or putting pressure on YP (Lindsey and Kalafat, 1998). The organisational barriers found included: staff having dual roles, such as having disciplinary and evaluative roles, and school timetables which mean that students move from lesson to lesson. This is now an old study and was carried out in American schools. Although it does not reflect the current views of YP in England, it offers some helpful insights into preferred helper characteristics.

A number of other studies have also explored the key qualities deemed as most important for YP in helpers (Adelman et al, 1993; Buston, 2002; Freake et al, 2007; Hodgson et al, 1986; Kurtz et al, 2000). The findings suggest that YP want the following qualities in their helpers: general friendliness and kindness (Adelman et al, 1993; Hodgson et al, 1986); helpers who are easy to talk to (Freake et al, 2007), fair and empathetic (Kurtz et al, 2000); caring (Buston, 2002; Kurtz et al, 2000); and trustworthy (Adelman et al, 1993; Erikson, 1950; 1968; Freake et al, 2007; Hodgson et al, 1986). Roose and John (2003) found that students had concerns about being judged by teachers and how seeking help for their mental health may change teachers' opinions of them. Furthermore, in a review by Gulliver and colleagues (2010) the personal characteristics of helpers which caused a barrier to YP seeking help from adults in school included: breach of confidentiality; being out of touch with adolescents; being psychologically inaccessible, which suggests adults are

unapproachable or unavailable, and being too busy (Lindsey and Kalafat, 1998; Helms, 2003).

It appears that it is not only the qualities helpers have that can encourage help-seeking, but what helpers do when YP seek help that makes a difference. Freake and colleagues (2007) identified that helpers should be non-judgemental when YP seek help from them; they should be honest in their responses, understanding and use humour appropriately (Adelman et al, 1993; Hodgson et al, 1986). Kurtz and colleagues (2000) found that YP wanted helpers to use a person-centred approach by giving concrete advice and counselling whilst setting boundaries and encouraging YP to make their own decisions. Helpers should also show acceptance, patience and flexibility, rather than feeling sorry or pitying YP, whilst ensuring confidentiality is upheld (Kurtz et al, 2000).

Specifically within student-teacher relationships, Graham, Powell and Truscott (2016) found that students want authentic relationships which show genuine care and respect. They want to be treated equally and feel valued which can be achieved by being listened to and responded to by teachers (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). YP also reported to want nurturing and ongoing relationships with their chosen helpers (Freake et al, 2007; Kurtz et al, 2000). It is important to them that they see the same person each time they seek help (Freake et al, 2007) and they want helpers to check-in on them (Kurtz et al, 2000). Issues around trust and relationships were found to be significant barriers to seeking help for homeless youths (Kurtz et al, 2000), this included: helpers that 'came and went' and those who broke promises by not doing what they said they would and not keeping in contact. Finally, not being able to build relationships with helpers and short-term encounters, which solve one aspect of their problems, was reported to discourage help-seeking (Kurtz et al, 2000). This study used in-depth interviews with 18-25-year-olds who had run away from home during their adolescent years for a range of reasons. Although the findings cannot be easily transferred to other sample sets due to small sample of 12 YP and the adverse circumstances many of them had found themselves in; the findings are likely to highlight YP's concerns about helpers albeit at the more extreme end of the spectrum.

Erikson's (1950; 1968) ideas around adolescents' identity formation highlights trust as a key quality when seeking help from a professional; this is due to adolescents' low self-esteem, vulnerability and social anxieties during this stage of development. Relationships therefore appear to be an important factor in adolescent help-seeking. This will now be discussed.

2.7 Student-teacher relationships: the role of positive relationships

CYP often experience positive and long-term relationships with adults during their time in school (Geddes, 2006). These positive student-teacher relationships have been found to be particularly important throughout early adolescence (Galbo, 1989; Goodenow, 1993; Ryan et al, 1994). The relevant theories related to student-teacher relationships, the impact of these positive relationships and how they can be developed are explored.

2.7.1 Key theories linked to relationships

Adults play a key role in CYP's development and it has been suggested that school staff can help to facilitate this by creating safe and supportive environments (Naude et al, 2014). Research by Qi (2012) found that the emotional needs of CYP need to be met in order to promote effective learning and metacognition (Cornelius-White, 2007). Historically, Maslow (1943) acknowledged that an individual's physical and emotional needs, as well as academic needs, need to be met in order to reach self-actualization. Self-actualization is a term used by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs. It describes the concept at the top of his hierarchy whereby an individual is able to meet their full potential when all of their lower level, basic needs, required for motivation, have been met (Maslow, 1943). These basic needs include: safety needs, such as security, and physiological needs, such as food and shelter. Maslow (1959) states that emotional development in children requires fundamental support systems (Laslett, 1977); Kennedy (2011) identified teachers as being well placed to provide this support and help meet the basic needs of pupils in school.

Maslow's (1943; 1959) ideas have been linked to attachment theory (Geddes, 2006). Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1953) states the importance of nurturing early relationships between an infant and primary caregiver in order to act as a blueprint for all future relationships. In 1988, Bowlby wrote about the concept of infants having a secure base from

which they can seek safety and eventually develop the confidence to explore the world away from this secure base. This secure base reflects Maslow's concept of an individual's basic needs. Schools can provide CYP with rich opportunities for positive and long-term relationships with adults, and therefore secure attachments, which can have a positive impact on their learning, their sense of self, overall well-being and willingness to seek help (Geddes, 2006; Moran, 2007).

2.7.2 The impact of relationships on student well-being

In a study by Gorard and Huat See (2011), when YP aged 14-16 were asked what contributed to their enjoyment of school '*relationships with teachers'* was a key theme found. YP reported that a positive relationship with adults in school creates shared enjoyment, trust, respect and a working partnership. The theme '*lack of rapport with teachers'* conveyed the YP's perceptions that poor relationships often caused stress and suppressed their ambition. It is worth noting that this study did not solely focus on the impact of positive student-teacher relationships on their enjoyment of school. Although these relationships were found to be a contributing factor to their enjoyment or disengagement in school, other factors are likely to have also contributed to this. Furthermore, the YP who discussed the importance of relationships with teachers appeared to primarily be YP who were, or had been, disengaged with school. If we consider the link between psychological well-being, relationships and engagement, as proposed in Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, it is perhaps unsurprising that YP who have negative experiences of relationships with adults in school are often those who are also disengaged with learning and consequently do not gain enjoyment from school.

In 2016, Graham, Powell and Truscott carried out a qualitative study looking at how relationships impact on well-being in school. To do this, the authors draw on Honneth's recognition theory (2004, 2001, 1995) in their data analysis to explore the different aspects of these relationships. Recognition theory (Honneth, 2004, 2001, 1995) highlights the importance of recognising how relationships can impact on an individual's confidence, self-esteem and well-being (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2010). The study, which was part of a larger mixed methods research project, used focus groups with 606 students and carried out interviews with 89 teachers and principals (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). The

researchers also involved YP and school staff in an advisory group to discuss the ideas which emerged from the data.

The findings highlighted the role of student-teacher relationships in fostering 'holistic subjective well-being'. However, it showed that YP and teachers place differing amounts of importance on the aspects of relationships which encourage well-being. Students place the highest importance on being respected and valued within their relationships, whereas teachers placed more importance on being cared for; although the authors also point out that teachers can care for students without respecting and valuing them. Graham, Powell and Truscott (2016) suggested that this can causes discrepancies within these relationships, such as, over-protectiveness which will limit a young person's agency.

Honneth (1995; 2007) also links recognition with identity suggesting that the negative emotions, associated with not being listened to or acknowledged, and the importance of relationships can impact on identity and a person's self-worth. This is an interesting idea if you consider Erikson's (1968) view of adolescence as the stage of development when identify formation and self-concept occurs. This would suggest the crucial importance of adolescents' needs being recognised within interpersonal relationships in order to aid identity formation and a positive sense of self.

A further interesting finding in Graham, Powell and Truscott's (2016) study, was that students talked about 'unwritten rules' in student-teacher relationships. This referred to students' perceptions of when it is acceptable or appropriate for teachers to ask if students are okay. The YP in this study felt that teachers are aware of these 'unwritten' rules as they often abide by them. This is an interesting assumption by the YP and was not discussed by any of the teachers interviewed in this study. It was also not explored further in the discussion of their article. This concept about unwritten rules is likely to require some further exploration however, my view would be that when some teachers are able to follow this 'unwritten rule', it is likely to be due to the quality of their relationship with that young person rather than having an explicit awareness of these rules.

Furthermore, students requested more opportunities to build relationships with adults in school; however, this is often overlooked due to pressures and constraints on teachers (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). Previous findings identify that teachers do not have time to build these relationships and are too concerned with their subject and academic achievement (Joyner, Haynes and Comer, 1994). This is particularly relevant in secondary schools where the organisation often leads to student-teacher relationships which are not as strong as those in primary schools (Dornbusch and Glasgow, 1996). This leads the discussion onto how these relationships develop.

2.7.3 The development of positive student-teacher relationships

In order to build relationships which encourage both pupils and staff to feel safe and accepted, research suggests that rapport should be built through opportunities for informal conversations (Anderson and Graham, 2016). Hu and colleagues (2017) carried out semi-structured interviews with professional staff from two medical schools in Australia. Using a grounded theory analysis and gaining feedback on their analysis via member checks, the authors identified that important relationships develop in school due to their contact being in short bursts, but in regular occurrences. Staff valued when their role in supporting a YP was recognised by other staff higher in the hierarchy and when they could develop trusting relationships with YP over a longer period of time and become involved in their care plans (Hu et al, 2017). Although this research had limitations in its sample, as only two schools were used and only female staff interviewed, it further suggests that organisational barriers are often present within the development of student-teacher relationships in educational settings.

It appears that that student-teacher relationships are not currently prioritised within education, training or policy (Kemp and Reupert, 2012; Sanderse et al, 2015), despite research linking positive student-teacher relationships with well-being (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016) and as a key component of adolescent help-seeking (Kurtz et al, 2000).

2.8 Research aims and questions

This literature review has highlighted the increasing prevalence of mental health disorders in CYP in the UK despite schools promoting and offering support for emotional well-being. The literature has told us that adolescent help-seeking is a complex topic with a wide range of factors impacting upon it. Although schools have been identified as key to supporting CYP, the research shows considerable challenges. If left unaddressed, these have been shown to have a negative impact on YP's academic outcomes, emotional well-being and help-seeking behaviours (Government Office for London, 2007; Hecht, Inderbitzen and Bukowski, 1998; Laukkanen, Shemeikka, Notkola, Koivumaa-Honkanen and Nissinen, 2002). However, there is one key gap remaining in the literature which this study primarily aims to address.

There has been limited research whereby CYP are asked their views regarding their help-seeking preferences, their views of the professionals who help them (Freake et a, 2007), particularly for their mental health needs (Chan and Quinn, 2012), and their views on emotional support provided through school (Kendal, Keeley and Callery, 2014). Moreover, there has been no research which involves working with YP at a more inclusive level other than consulting with them at the data analysis stage of the research process. The current literature in the area also suggests that more research needs to focus on how we can encourage YP to seek-help to improve YP's mental health and emotional well-being (Gulliver et al, 2010). In order to gain the perspectives of the YP in the study and empower them, the current study took an inclusive approach. The methodology, which will be discussed in the next chapter, allowed for the research questions to evolve according to the direction the YP took their discussions in.

Therefore, the aim of this research was to explore the help-seeking behaviours of YP in school aged between 11 and 14 years of age when they require support with their emotional well-being; from the perspective of the YP themselves. More specifically, the research initially aimed to explore what YP perceive to be the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of adults in school which act as barriers and facilitators to adolescent help-

seeking for their emotional well-being in order to promote help-seeking behaviours in school.

The initial research questions identified were as follows:

- What staff characteristics do YP perceive to motivate them to seek emotional well-being support from school staff?

- What staff characteristics do YP perceive to inhibit them to seek emotional well-being support from school staff?

- What are YP's perceptions of the role of school staff in providing support for their emotional well-being?

- What staff characteristics do YP perceive to be helpful/unhelpful in supporting their emotional well-being?

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by discussing the research paradigm adopted in the current study and the ontological and epistemological positions which underpin my chosen methodology. It then considers the aims of the current study as an inclusive piece of research with YP aged 11 to 14 years. Grounded theory is then appraised in relation to how it supported the development of the YP's views. It evaluates the strengths and criticisms of this approach as well as the alternative methodologies that were considered. The methods used during the research process will then be discussed, this includes: the YP as researchers and participants, the inclusive data collection and analysis and how the focus of the research changed in line with the YP's discussions. Ethical considerations are also discussed throughout, particularly in regards to working with YP.

3.2 Research paradigm

Qualitative research can be useful for gaining the perspectives of participants and can help researchers to develop theory from their fieldwork (Elliott et al, 1999). Woolfson (2011) highlights the role of qualitative research within education as a helpful way to gain an insight into participants perspectives and real-life experiences within schools. Qualitative research is the alternative to positivism which gathers quantitative data often through experimental measures in order to gain greater credibility (Coolican, 2014). The move to qualitative approaches to studying the social sciences in the 1970s was primarily due to views that people, and social phenomena, could not be truly understood by reducing them to numbers (Coolican, 2014).

Qualitative research also has the potential for researchers to gather data that enables a real understanding of what might be going on within a specific context (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2013). In the case of this study, a qualitative research design was chosen to capture the complexity of the real world (Braun and Clarke, 2013) as perceived by the YP who took part in the study. This aimed to identify some possible ways of informing policies and

practices (Charmaz, 2014) to promote adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being.

3.2.1 How can qualitative research be evaluated?

Like quantitative research, qualitative research should be evaluated using an appropriate criteria (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study uses the following criteria:

- **Confirmability** ensures that researcher biases are avoided as much as possible whilst still acknowledging that complete objectivity is not possible (Bryman, 2016).
- **Dependability** ensures that the research process is consistent with the standards for the research design (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Korstjens and Moser, 2018).
- **Credibility** considers the trustworthiness of the findings (Bryman, 2016).
- **Transferability** is the idea that qualitative findings can be transferred or applied to similar sample sets whilst taking into consideration the differing context (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This allows for the reader to make a judgement as to whether the contextual information is similar enough in order to reasonably apply the findings to their specific sample (Braun and Clarke, 2013).
- **Reflexivity** is defined as a process in which the role of the researcher is acknowledged within knowledge construction (Bryman, 2016).

These criteria will be used in relation to the study in section 5.5.1.

3.3 Ontology and epistemology

Ontology refers to the nature of social realities and primarily considers social life as either objective or constructed by social actors (Bryman, 2016). Objectivism claims that meanings derived from social phenomena can be separated from social actors. In contrast with this position, constructionism views social phenomena as socially constructed through interactions and recognises that it is constantly changing; it also acknowledges the researcher's social construction of the studied social phenomena (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the ontological position adopted in this study is constructionism as it suggests

that realities are created through social interaction in groups, which will vary according to the individuals and the context.

Epistemological considerations look at the nature of knowledge and how we discover aspects of the social world (Ritchie et al, 2013). Within social research, acquiring knowledge about the social world can be seen to be inductive, by collecting data and forming knowledge and theories from the data, or deductive, which sees knowledge as being acquired to test a hypothesis (Ritchie et al, 2013). However, Blaikie (2007) criticises the polarised nature of research being purely inductive or deductive and instead sees research on more of a continuum; with knowledge acquired through both inductive and deductive processes. Within qualitative inductive research, although theories can derive from the data, previous theory is often used to situate the research (Bryman, 2016). As previously discussed, whilst acknowledging that my own assumptions and previous knowledge will influence my data and analysis throughout my study, the process this study adopts intends to be broadly inductive.

Key positions within epistemology include positivism, realism and interpretivism. Positivism believes that research into social realities should adopt methods in line with that of research in the natural sciences and therefore takes a quantitative approach to research (Bryman, 2016). Similarly, realism also sees social reality as a phenomenon that can be studied scientifically using objective principles. However, in contrast to the positivist position, critical realists acknowledge the non-observable entities to social reality and therefore can adopt or combine both quantitative and qualitative methods in their research (Bryman, 2016).

However, the epistemological position this research identifies itself with is interpretivism. Interpretivism is the position most often adopted by researchers within the social sciences and contrasts with the positivist position which advocates the use of methods used in the natural sciences to study the social sciences (Bryman, 2016). The interpretivist position acknowledges individual differences and focuses on drawing out and interpreting the subjective meanings of social entities (Bryman, 2016). Interpretivism acknowledges that an

alternative to the use of a scientific model is required to research the complexities of social action. This position most accurately fits with the current study as it aimed to uncover a social phenomenon (Farzanfar, 2005), the meanings of YP's experiences when they have sought help from adults in school for their emotions, whilst acknowledging my own perception of these meanings (Merriam, 1998) as discussed in section 1.5.

3.4 Methodological rationale

This section will now consider the methodological rationale in terms of being able to meet the study's intended aims and carrying out the research with YP. First, it will highlight the importance of gaining the views of children and YP and how this led to the inclusive nature of the study.

3.4.1 Research with children and young people: an inclusive research approach

Bourke (2009) promoted inclusive research stating that it should involve the people concerned in the research in the planning, process and analysis stages. Whilst Walmsley and Johnson (2003) highlighted the need for inclusive research to benefit, and be of relevance to, those being researched. Both Grover (2004) and Kellett (2005a) believe that inclusive research can produce more authentic and therefore valid knowledge due to participants being seen as experts on their experiences. Similarly, Thomas and O'Kane (1998) strongly argue that by involving CYP in the research process, in terms of what to explore and how much they want to participate, can impact on the overall validity and reliability of the study.

None of the studies in the review by Freake and colleagues (2007), discussed in the previous chapter, used inclusive research whereby the YP led the interviews or focus groups themselves; this may have impacted on the views they gave (Freake et al, 2007). In their review, most research only involved participants in the data gathering procedures. Furthermore, throughout my systematic literature searches, none of the studies found had used an inclusive research approach other than in a couple of studies (Graham et al, 2016; Kendal et al, 2014) which asked YP to assist with data analysis to some degree.

Morgan (2000) found that by gaining CYP's perspectives regarding their education and learning preferences subsequently led to staff being more responsive to their needs and had an overall positive impact on the learning environment. However, on a day to day basis within education, gaining CYP's views and participation is often seen to be tokenistic rather than as a means to improve practices and better meet their needs (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000). Hart (1992) suggests that this tokenism attempts to look as though YP have been given a voice but limits their contributions; this is likely to be partly due to historical views of children who are seen as objects rather than people with rights and who are treated with respect (Green and Hogan, 2005). This will be discussed further later in the co-research process section.

The following section describes my chosen methodological approach which in turn helped to inform my methods for collecting and analysing the data.

3.5 Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) jointly developed the original grounded theory (GT) as a qualitative approach to research. It allowed for the development of a theory which emerged from the data gathered, as opposed to a deductive process whereby research is shaped by existing theories (Charmaz, 2014). That being said, Bryman (2016) suggests that grounded theory methodology uses a more iterative strategy which constantly moves between a deductive and inductive process comparing theory and data. Although this approach helped the move from quantitative to qualitative research in the social sciences in the 1960s, the earlier versions of the approach were criticised for being too positivist (Charmaz, 2014).

The approach chosen for the current study was the constructivist version of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2003). Constructionist grounded theory was developed to be a more flexible version of the original grounded theory approach with alternative ontological and epistemological positions. It views social reality as being constructed and knowledge as interpreted (Charmaz, 2014). This version of the approach therefore highlights the

researcher's subjectivity and the role this plays in the data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

Constructivist grounded theory is an approach which provides tools (Bryman, 2016) for collecting and analysing qualitative data in order to construct a theory that is grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2014). It provides systematic guidelines and uses comparative methods through data analysis resulting in emergent conceptual theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2014). The tools involved in grounded theory include:

- ***Memos*** should be written by the researcher throughout the research process as soon as they come to mind (Glaser, 1978). Birks, Chapman and Francis (2008) suggest that there are two different types of memos: operational memos which are similar to the reflexive journal in that it records why you have come to a certain decision in the research process; and coding memos which explicitly comment on codes and categories and examine and explain these in a more analytical way. The purpose of memos is to encourage researchers to compare and link different parts of the data to contribute to the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

- ***Theoretical sampling*** is a strategy (Charmaz, 2014) whereby the researcher chooses to gather more data, focusing on a category already identified in the data, in order to elaborate and refine its properties (Teddlie and Yu, 2007); therefore narrowing the focus of the study (Charmaz, 2014).

- ***Coding*** in grounded theory allows for summarising and labelling sections of the data (Charmaz, 2014). There are two phases of coding: initial and focused. Codes are similar to the data, rather than being analysed, and often use the words of participants and the actions, feelings and explanations for how events occurred (Charmaz, 2014).

- ***Theoretical saturation*** is the process of continuing to collect and analysis data until no new categories (Charmaz, 2014), or new properties about a category, emerge in the new data being gathered (Glaser, 1978; Holton, 2007; Wiener, 2007).

- ***Theoretical categories*** emerge from the most relevant focused codes. They are more conceptual and attempt to define and analyse the codes. A category may comprise of several combined codes in order to explain ideas and processes in a more abstract way (Charmaz, 2014).

3.5.1 Strengths of Grounded Theory

One of the key strengths of grounded theory is its flexibility (Charmaz, 2014) which, in the current study, allowed me to elicit the views of YP around a topic without restricting the potential direction of the research. The constructivist grounded theory methodological approach allows for a shift in the focus of the study as a result of coding at each stage (Willig, 2013; Charmaz, 2014); this allowed for the study to be directed by the YP themselves and empowers them to talk about the issues that are important to them. Previous research has found that YP are rarely asked about the topic and are usually directed heavily by adults or the researchers (Woodhead and Falkner, 2000; Prout, 2000; Laybourn et al, 2001).

Additionally, the coding process throughout a grounded theory study is systematic in nature helping even novice researchers, such as myself, carry out the analysis (MacDonald, 2001). This process also aids the quality criteria of the study by using the codes to ground researcher's interpretations in the data (Myers, 2009) and being able to generalise and compare the findings with similar studies (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Initial coding is often carried out on a line-by-line basis (Charmaz, 2014) which strengthens the process by ensuring the codes are grounded in the data rather than the researcher's preconceptions (Charmaz, 2014). Throughout coding, codes can be changed, reworded or coded again in order to develop a deeper analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Following this, the process of focused coding is emergent and can therefore be revealing in terms of allowing the researcher to engage with the data in a new and unexpected way (Charmaz, 2014).

Finally, Charmaz (2014) highlights the usefulness of grounded theory studies in informing policies and practice.

3.5.2 Criticisms of Grounded Theory and possible ways to address them

In ensuring that this study acknowledges its limitations, it is necessary to consider the common criticisms of constructivist grounded theory and some possible ways to overcome or minimise them.

It has been argued that the coding process in grounded theory can lead to fragmented data which does not account for the specific context; this subsequently leads to fragmented narratives (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). To address this, Charmaz (2014) promotes the use of action words, or verbs, as codes as well as using the participants own words. This has been adopted in the current study to try and truly represent the participants' perspectives but also to ensure the language is accessible for the pupil researchers during their involvement in the analysis.

Different versions of GT have varying ontological and epistemological stances which can confuse researchers and readers (Hussein et al, 2014; Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, throughout the literature (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; 2014), grounded theorists frequently talk of concepts and categories without any clear explanation of these and the differences between them, making it confusing for researchers and readers alike (Bryman, 2016). This is of particular concern as it may also inhibit replication (Osborne, 2018). I have attempted to overcome this by following Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach and theoretical categories as a way to explain processes.

A final criticism of grounded theory that is relevant to this study, is that the approach does not always lead to a theory. Often, if it does, this theory is highly criticised as not meeting the criteria for a theory (Charmaz, 2014). According to Thornberg and Charmaz (2012, p. 41) "A theory states relationships between abstract concepts and may aim for either explanation or understanding". Although Bryman (2016) also recognises that grounded theory studies do not always lead to a new theory, he suggests that some helpful concepts

can emerge. The current study aimed to highlight some insightful categories which arouses interest and possible future research rather than claiming to have developed a theory.

3.5.3 Alternative methodological considerations

Throughout the development of this study I considered a couple of alternative methodologies. Firstly, I considered approaching the topic using appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry focuses on what is already working well in order to encourage further positive change (Rossi, 1998). I initially considered this methodology as I wanted to explore what might facilitate and increase the likelihood of YP seeking help for their emotional well-being however, I decided that this approach meant that I would be ignoring all of the factors that are currently inhibiting adolescent help-seeking and how this problem could be overcome, which is a common criticism of the approach (Rossi, 1998; Jan Reed, 2007).

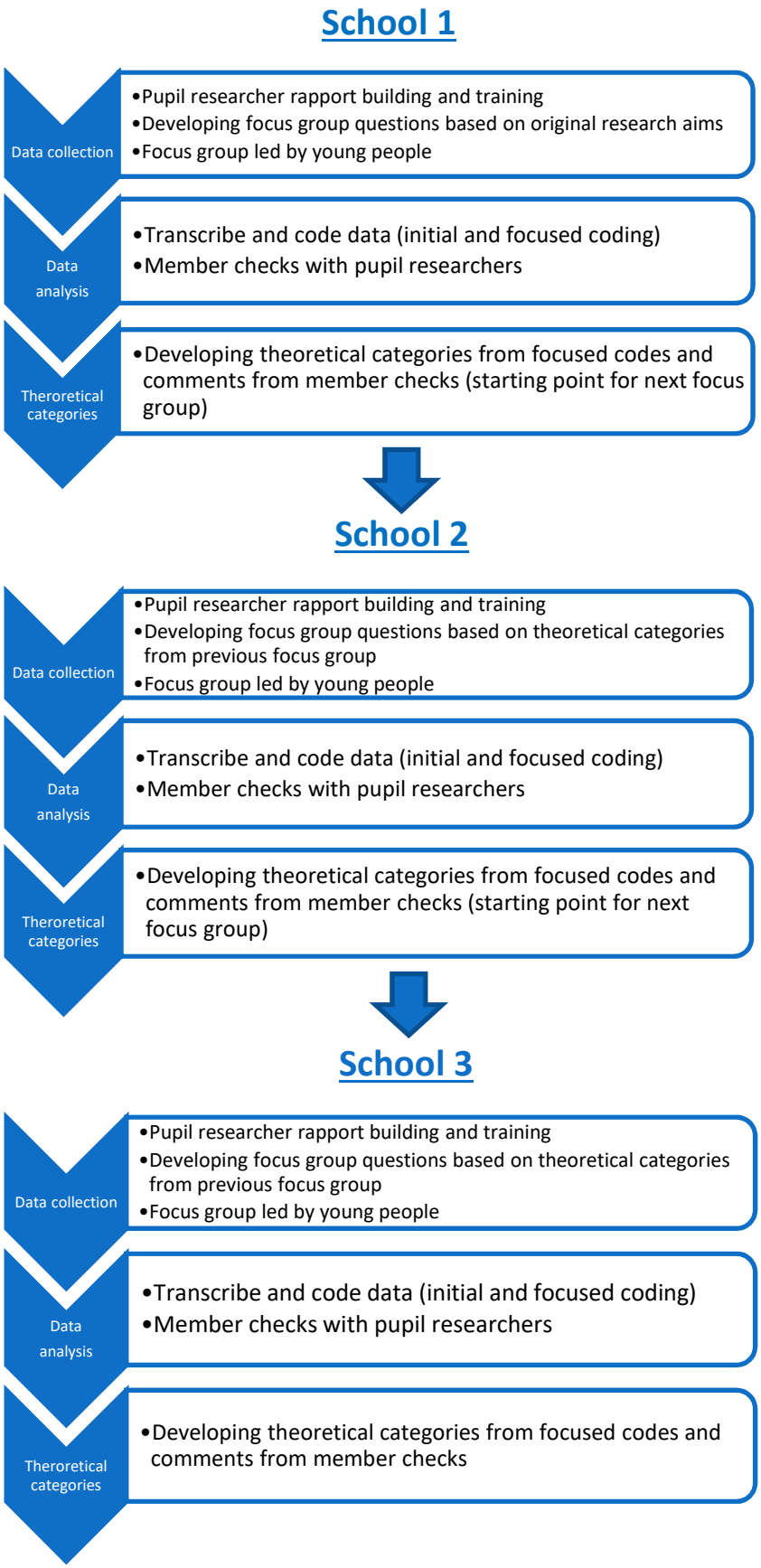
I also considered using a narrative approach, after suggestions made by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) that the coding process in grounded theory can lead to the context being lost and the data being fragmented. A narrative approach aims to collect peoples' stories about how they experience the world (Moen, 2006). As it was important to me to truly hear the experiences and perceptions of the YP in my study, a narrative approach would allow for me to hear the stories of YP as a whole rather than dissecting it into categories (Riessman, 2008). However, this approach would have significantly limited my sample size and therefore the transferability of the findings.

3.6 Method

The inclusive methods used in this study were pupil researcher led focus groups with YP, supplementary data was then gathered via semi-structured interviews with school SENCOs and an analysis of school policies; the latter were both carried out by the researcher. This section will detail the methods used throughout the study. It will discuss the research participants, the data collection process and how the data was analysed and compared using grounded theory and thematic analysis techniques.

The diagram below summarises the methods used throughout the study. It intends to aid the reader's understanding of the research process.

Figure 1: Methods



3.6.1 Research Participants

The following section looks more closely at how the participants were selected and recruited. It also considers some of the ethical issues surrounding the research participants.

3.6.1.1 Recruiting

This study took place within a large, rural county in England. I initially contacted my EP colleagues who worked with the secondary schools in the county and asked them to put forward the names of schools they thought might be interested in taking part. Link EPs then suggested schools who were motivated to improve the pastoral support offered to their students and information packs, including a letter to the head teacher, were sent out.

Information sheets were provided to the Head Teacher and SENCO (Appendix 4 and 5), and once consent was gained (Appendices 3, 10 and 11), the school assisted me to recruit pupil researchers and pupil participants. Flyers were displayed in schools, years 7 to year 9 were informed about the research during tutor time and the SENCO approached certain students who they thought may be interested in taking part.

Students could choose to take part as either a pupil researcher or a pupil participant. It was clearly explained that I only required 2 pupil researchers and therefore if I received more than 2 consent forms from YP wishing to take part as pupil researchers then they would be selected on a first come, first served basis. Other students would then be asked whether they would like to take part as pupil participants. Within each school, the first six students to return their signed consent forms took part in the study.

Pupil researchers and pupil participants were provided with accessible information sheets and consent forms (Appendices 6, 8, 12 and 14). These contained key information about the aims of the research, what taking part would involve as well as details regarding how they would be protected and how their information would be used. Consent was also gained on a verbal basis with participants at the beginning of each data collection session as recommended by (NCB, 2011). This was particularly important for the pupil researchers as

they had quite a lot of involvement in the research process and therefore were likely to require more time to process the information and have additional questions. In line with the BPS code of ethics and conduct (2018) and the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014), gaining consent helps participants to feel respected and upholds their dignity. It is also a requirement to gain written parental consent for YP under the age of 16 as well from the YP themselves (NCB, 2011). Therefore information sheets and consent forms were also provided for parents (Appendices 7, 9, 13 and 15).

3.6.1.2 Sampling

A purposive sampling approach was adopted during this study which is thought to be a strategic, rather than a random, process (Bryman, 2016). To identify participants, a priori purposive sampling approach was used (Hood, 2007) meaning that the criteria for which participants to include in the study was predetermined from the start of the research process (Gentles et al, 2015). This sampling approach was chosen as it was important that the YP involved were able to adequately answer the research questions (Hood, 2007). It was also an effective approach in terms of time and it allowed me to be able to plan the resources to meet the age and needs of the YP. Therefore the following criteria for inclusion was used:

Table 1: Participant inclusion criteria

Participant	Criteria for inclusion
Pupil researchers	✓ In school years 7-9 (aged 11-14) ✓ Previously sought help from an adult in school for an emotional problem or help with managing emotions ✓ Perceived confidence to work with a researcher and lead a focus group
Pupil participants	✓ In school years 7-9 (aged 11-14) ✓ Previously sought help from an adult in school for an emotional problem or help with managing emotions
SENCO	✓ Role of SENCO in participating school

3.6.1.3 Participant information

The participants for this study were of mixed gender from three individual secondary academies. Within each school, there were two pupil researchers and between three and four additional pupil participants who took part in the focus group. All of the focus groups were mixed gender. The SENCO within each school also participated in a semi-structured interview.

Table 2: Pupil researchers and participants

School	Pupil researchers	Pupil participants (pseudonyms)	Total number of YP in focus group	Interview
1	Emily Sophie	Hannah Will Abbie	5	SENCO
2	Julie Boogyman	Cherry Elephant Monkey Grant	6	SENCO
3	Luke Ninja	Spiderman The Doctor Spice	5	SENCO

All of the pupil researchers and participants were in school years 7 – 9 and were therefore aged between 11 – 14. As discussed in the literature review, this age group was chosen due to adolescence being a key developmental stage for YP (Erikson, 1950; Gibson et al, 1992) and one that can be particularly challenging emotionally (Kennedy, 2011).

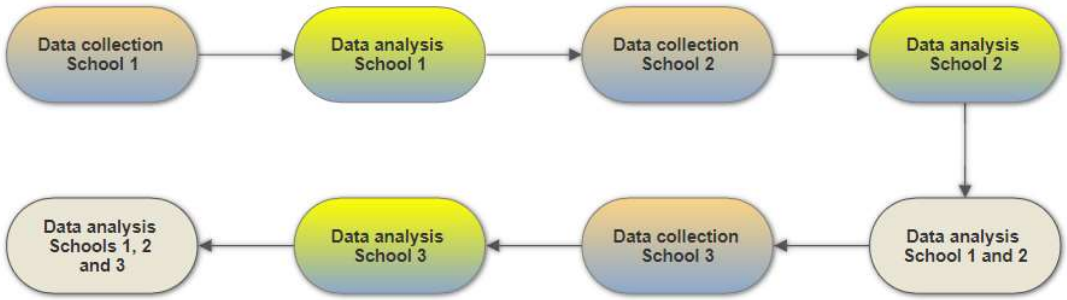
The school SENCO was chosen as a participant due to their role within school. All schools are required to have a designated SENCO whose role is to develop and co-ordinate SEN policies and provision (DfE/DoH, 2015). One of the broad areas of SEN is SEMH, the SENCO should therefore have a good understanding of the school's policies and provision in place to support and promote emotional development and well-being, particularly for those CYP with an identified SEN. SENCOs are required to be qualified teachers with either experience in the role or have completed the national award for SENCOs (DfE/DoH, 2015).

3.6.2 Data Collection and data analysis

This section describes the data collection and data analysis process for the three different forms of data used in this study. The main source of data collected within this study was from the focus groups with YP. This section will start by detailing how this data was collected and analysed. It will then move onto explain how the supplementary data, from the SENCO interviews and school policies, was collected and analysed.

In line with the grounded theory methodology, data was collected and analysed as shown in the model below.

Figure 2: Grounded theory process



3.6.2.1 Focus groups: data collection and analysis

This section describes how grounded theory approaches were used to collect and analyse data from the focus groups.

3.6.2.2 Focus group data collection

This section begins with describing the co-research process with the pupil researchers and explicitly stating how this was carried out. It will then detail how the pupil researchers collected data through the focus groups, as this formed the basis of the final analysis. Ethical considerations to conducting research with YP are considered throughout and more specifically this section highlights the steps taken to prevent harm to the participants.

3.6.2.2.1 The co-research process

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that CYP can be vulnerable to exploitation when involved in research (Beresford, 1997; Kirk, 2007). This has led to the development of guidelines for practice around research with children, for example, the National Children's Bureau guidelines for research with CYP (2011). In order to protect and respect the YP in this study, I gained ethical approval from the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bristol.

When involving CYP in research, Franklin and Sloper (2006) felt that YP should be encouraged to be involved and provide feedback throughout all stages of the research process. One key finding of the review by Freake and colleagues (2007) was that although adolescents are more willing to be critical of services compared to other age groups (Piersma, 1987), this was dependent on who was asking the questions. It was established that YP are less likely to criticise adults and services if it is a member of that service who is asking them for their views (Freake et al, 2007). This led me to train two YP as pupil researchers within each of the participating schools and aimed to empower them by supporting them to plan and facilitate the focus groups. I also hoped that this would make it more comfortable for participants to criticise adults and services in their school.

There were several additional considerations required during the research proposal stage as a result of having YP as co-researchers. Firstly, in order for participants to be able to confidently express their views and contribute meaningfully in this study, Macran et al (1999) and Bragg (2007) suggest that training and support for the co-researchers is required. Secondly, the power differences between myself, the researcher, and the pupil researchers, would need to be addressed. In order to minimise the power differences often highlighted in research with YP (Mauthner, 1997; Thomas and O'Kane, 1998), I ensured that several sessions were set up over the study to build rapport with the YP to ensure they felt relaxed and comfortable working with me (NCB, 2011). I did this by getting to know the YP through playing a game and highlighting that the research aims to listen to what they have to say. This rapport building also allowed for ongoing negotiation and collaboration between myself and the pupil researchers, as suggested by Ridge (2003).

Furthermore, the pupil researchers were also involved in the data analysis process in this study. Morrow and Richards (1996) saw methods which encourage CYP to interpret their own data fruitful in breaking down unequal power relations between CYP and the researcher. Further considerations around the power relations involved in the focus groups will be discussed in section 3.6.2.2.3 and the pupil researchers involvement in the data analysis process will be discussed in section 3.6.2.3.2.

Once I had gained consent from the pupil researchers and their parents within each school I arranged an initial visit. This visit, ***session one***, aimed to prepare the YP for in the role of pupil researcher in terms of:

- giving them further information about the research;
- introducing myself as the researcher and the other pupil researcher in their school;
- clarifying their role in the research and what will be expected of them;
- helping them to develop the skills required for the role (NCB, 2011).

Session two entailed training the pupil researchers to carry out their role in line with NCB guidance (2011) (Appendix 17). This comprised of:

- Teaching the pupil researchers what a focus group is. This included a video example of a focus group being led by YP
- A discussion around what factors make a successful focus group
- The role of the focus group leaders including what they would be expected to do and how they could do this
- An explanation of the research topic and what the research aimed to find out more about (based on the initial research questions)
- What needed to be achieved in the session
- They planned a warm-up activity to lead prior to the focus group to allow the participants to get to know each other and feel more comfortable
- They were supported to develop a script to explain what a focus group is to the pupil participants
- They developed a set of ground rules for the focus group

- The pupil researchers were then supported to develop some focus group questions to help answer the research questions
- Finally, the pupil researchers agreed on who was going to do what throughout the focus group.

Session three involved carrying out the focus group. The pupil researchers led this session starting with a warm-up game and then explaining the ground rules (Appendix 22). The pupil researchers then started recording and initiated the focus group by asking the questions they had devised themselves (Appendix 21).

3.6.2.2.2 The focus groups

A focus group is considered a well organised group discussion about a particular topic within a non-threatening environment (Krueger, 1994). Krueger (1994) promotes the use of focus groups as they are a useful method for gaining rich information from service users around their perceptions and feelings. Furthermore, Willig (2013) suggests that focus groups are a suitable method for data gathering within a grounded theory study. Kennedy (2011) highlights the central role that peers play in the lives and experiences of YP and Albrecht (1993) states that adolescents especially form their views through interactions with others. Consequently, focus groups tend to be more successful when those within them share similar qualities, such as, age, gender and background (Krueger, 1994).

Before the focus group began, the pupil researchers asked the pupil participants to choose a pseudonym name for themselves. These pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and throughout this thesis. As part of the ground rules (Appendix 22), the pupil researchers then asked the pupil participants not to mention the names of others during the focus group, where at all possible, and were asked to refer to particular members of staff they were talking about as a 'teacher'. They were also asked not to discuss the details of the focus group conversation to others unless it was information about themselves that they wished to share. The YP agreed to keep to these confidentiality conditions when providing consent (Appendix 12 and 14). This anonymity aimed to encourage the YP to be open and honest in

what they discussed and allowed them a safe space to voice their negative, as well as positive, experiences.

In line with the BPS (2018) code of ethics and conduct, the importance of ensuring confidentiality within research ensures participants are respected. Researchers must draw attention to the limits of confidentiality and what information may need to be passed on (BPS, 2014). The limits to confidentiality were clearly stated and reminders were given throughout the research in order to safeguard the YP participating in the study should they make a disclosure. I ensured that I was aware of the safeguarding lead and procedures within each setting prior to starting data collection with the YP. Furthermore, the Data Protection Act (Gov.uk, 2018) was adhered to throughout the study via the University of Bristol's (2015) Research Data Management and Open Data Policy. Data was recorded on an encrypted recording device and stored safely on a password protected server.

Throughout each focus group the pupil researchers asked the group a question and encouraged discussion by asking the views and opinions of others in the group. The pupil researchers also joined in these discussions and shared their own views and experiences; they moved onto the next question when the discussion naturally drew to a close. The focus group questions, designed by the pupil researchers, were as follows:

School 1 Focus group Questions

1. How have the teachers supported you when you've felt emotional in the past?
2. Can you give us any examples of what adults have done that have been helpful in the past?
3. From your experiences you go to your friends because the adults don't help, what did the adults do that were unhelpful?
4. What things do you find supportive and what ways could adults use those and improve the support?
5. Are there any helpful traits, that adults in our school have now?
6. Do you feel confident going to adults for support with your emotions and in what ways could the adults make you feel more comfortable to go to them?

School 2 Focus group Questions

1. Would you prefer adults in school to sort out a problem for you or they help you to sort out the problem yourself? And why?
2. Do you prefer talking to an adult about a problem, or….do you prefer to keep it to yourself?
3. Do you worry about how other students see you when you go to an adult for help with your emotions? Tell us about this.
4. Would you choose a particular adult in school to talk to about a problem or emotion? If so, why do you go them, if not, then who do you go to like do you go to a friend or family member or like who do you go to?
5. Do some adults understand and others misunderstand your problems/feelings? Tell us about this.
6. What characteristics, for example, caring or being kind help or don't help when you go to an adult for support with your emotions?

School 3 Focus group Questions

1. What are your relationships like with adults in school?
2. What do you think people think about you when you've been to a teacher for help?
3. When have you found that an adult has thought your problem is really small but to you it's really big?
4. What problems would you go to an adult with and what problems wouldn't you go to an adult with?
5. Have you lost confidence in adults in school in the past due to them not listening or helping?
6. Do you think sometimes you can keep things in and be an adult and other times you have to tell an adult?

I was present throughout the focus groups making field notes and supporting where necessary when the YP asked for help, for example, with the recording equipment or when they were unsure about whether they should move onto the next question. Although I

attempted to reduce the influence I had on the discussion and encourage the YP to manage all aspects of the focus group themselves, the YP were aware of my presence and I was aware of the power dynamics this caused. As a result, the YP would look to me for guidance or reassurance if they were unsure about anything in the focus group.

3.6.2.2.3 Power relations in the focus groups

In addition to the power relations between myself and the YP involved in the study, there are also power relations to consider between the YP themselves. For example, two of the YP from each school were recruited as pupil researchers which presents power differences between them and the pupil participants. There were also YP of different ages within the focus groups which also may have led to power differences for example, one of the pupil researchers in school 2 was a year 7 pupil and several of the participants in this focus group were year 9 pupils. This pupil researcher acknowledged that she initially felt daunted by the prospect of leading a focus group with older students however, this was not apparent during the focus group. Although these power differences cannot be completely removed (NCB, 2011), considerations were given to ensure they were minimised as much as possible. To reduce the potential power imbalance between the YP, the pupil researchers designed a warm up activity to allow the YP to get to know each other and attempt to overcome any concerns around working with peers they did not know or who were older than them, as endorsed in the National Children's Bureau guidelines for research with CYP (2011). This activity, such as a 'would you rather' game used in one of the focus groups, really helped to relax the pupil researchers and participants and appeared to overcome any initial anxieties the YP had.

Although gatekeepers, in the form of YP s' parents and school staff, ensure the protection of YP, these power differences can either prevent a young person from taking part or persuade an unwilling young person to take part (Harden et al, 2000). The latter led me to ensure the high quality of the information provided to the YP and make sure that their ethical rights were discussed with them throughout. Their choice to withdraw at any time during the focus group was also made explicit and I monitored the YP's non-verbal communication,

including their body language, throughout the focus groups to identify any YP who appeared to want to withdraw.

3.6.2.2.4 Preventing harm to participants

Psychologists have a responsibility to ensure that the welfare of those they are working with is of paramount importance (BPS, 2018). In ensuring this, preventing harm to participants and debriefing participants in research is imperative.

Possible risks and harm to participants was considered throughout this research. For example, it was acknowledged that YP could become upset during the focus group due to being asked to talk about their experiences of seeking help for emotional well-being. During one of the focus groups, one of the YP started talking about some extremely distressing experiences in school. This was managed well by the pupil researchers during the focus group and I ensured that I followed it up with him individually after the focus group debrief. In line with BPS (2018) guidelines around debriefing participants and NCB (2011) guidelines around offering YP information about where they can access help or support if required, the pupil researchers and pupil participants in this study received a 'Support for Pupils' sheet after they were debriefed (Appendix 16). The next section turns to how the data analysis of the focus groups were carried out.

3.6.2.3 Analysis of data from focus groups

This section details how the focus groups were analysed using grounded theory approaches: initial and focused coding. It then explains how the member checks were carried out and how this contributed to the development of the theoretical categories. Finally, this section discusses the how the theoretical categories were used to carry out theoretical sampling from school to school.

3.6.2.3.1 Analysis of focus groups

The analysis of the focus group data started from first meeting with the participants. Memos were written throughout the research process, after each session with the YP and throughout analysis, commenting on any ideas that came to mind, from contextual

information to possible codes I saw emerging. The YP were not involved in writing memos due to time restraints however, they were consulted on these emerging ideas during member checking. Memos were recorded in a number of ways for convenience. Primarily, memos were recorded on sticky notes or within my electronic reflective journal.

The focus group recordings were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were anonymised and stored safely on a password protected laptop. The coding of the data could then begin. In line with the systematic nature of analysis in constructivist grounded theory (MacDonald, 2001), the process of data analysis for the focus groups is clearly set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Process of GT data analysis

Stage of analysis	**Type of analysis**	**Process of analysis**
1	*Initial coding*	Line-by-line coding using the words of the participants
2	*Focused coding*	Narrowing the codes by being more analytic and focusing in on important ideas whilst using language that could be understood by the pupil researchers
3	*Member checking*	Gaining feedback from pupil researchers on the focused codes and amending as necessary
4	*Theoretical categories*	Combining focused codes with memos to form theoretical categories which explain and analyse the processes inherent in the data

The data analysis in this study followed the process set out above however, given the flexible nature of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), it allowed for the researcher's subjectivity to influence the direction of the analysis.

Charmaz (2014) views the subjectivity, resulting from the researchers' preconceptions, as a key feature of constructivist grounded theory and one which can assist with interpretation. My knowledge of the topic and previous experience will have impacted on how the data

was interpreted; as I will have been able to identify processes which the participants may not (Charmaz, 2014), such as links to child development theories. Interpretations of the data into more abstract categories, suggested by Charmaz (2014), occurred after the focused codes were presented to the pupil researchers for feedback. Similar to the researchers' preconceptions, Charmaz (2014) suggests ensuring that there is data to support any assertions made. This was achieved by comparing the categories found in the data with one another, as this helped to identify any implicit assertions (Charmaz, 2014), and via the member checks with pupil researchers discussed in 3.6.2.3.2.

Once the data from each focus group was analysed and the theoretical categories were finalised, a further analysis took place of all of the data collected from the focus groups in schools 1, 2 and 3 (Appendix 26). At this stage, the theoretical categories and memos written from each school were compared and contrasted to one another to form overarching theoretical categories, which aim to be seen as helpful concepts (Bryman, 2016). This led to the development of the new research questions:

- ***How do YP decide whether to seek help from an adult in school to support their emotional well-being?***

- ***What are the barriers to YP seeking help from an adult in school for support with their emotional well-being?***

- ***What helps YP to seek help for their emotional well-being from adults in school?***

- ***What additional skills/support do YP need in order to seek help for their emotional well-being from adults in school?***

Although my chosen methods aimed to help answer the original research questions, Charmaz (2014) states that these questions can evolve in response to the data. These new research questions evolved as a result of using an inclusive approach.

3.6.2.3.2 Member checks

Member checks were used to involve the pupil researchers in the data analysis process. Member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is a way of gaining credibility in the findings by asking participants for feedback. Livari (2018) proposes that member checks invite the informants into the research process at a more in-depth level and therefore, this process is seen as well suited to inclusive research as it increases collaboration (Kornbluh, 2015).

To do this, I met with the pupil researchers in each school once I had completed the focused coding stage of the analysis to ask them for feedback. We read through the transcript together and the pupil researchers were given an opportunity to comment on whether they felt that the focused codes given to an excerpt of the transcript accurately reflected the participants' views in their opinion. It also allowed for the pupil researchers to interpret my data analysis and challenge or expand the identified codes as suggested by Livari (2018).

Here is an excerpt of the transcript:

Participant	Transcript	Initial coding	Focused coding (see key below)
Will	In the past, I've found that um….whenever I got upset the teachers would take me out their room, or put me somewhere where other students can't see. Um….we just talk about what happened and they'd give me a few minutes to calm down and like, go back into class and continue with my work.	Upset Taken out (of class) Talk Time to calm down Carry on with learning	Talking Letting him get out of the situation (Given time to calm/get on with learning
Emily	**Anyone else have any comments to make on this? (Pause – all shake heads) ok, so ready for the next question? (all nod).**		
Sophie	**Do you go to the teachers or your friends more? How do your friends support you in a way your teachers don't?**		
Hannah	Um, I feel like with my friends that they kind of understand more because they know more about me, um…….and like, because they're like our age they understand what we're going through. And maybe can relate to some of it.	Friends understand Know me Age – understand (empathise)relating to problems	Friends understand/relate Friends are going through it or have gone through it (peers can relate)
Abbie	I um…..find, my friends can be more understanding that teachers because they know what you're going through, and, you feel like, with teachers you can't tell them everything but with your friends you can trust them and you can always speak to them, more than you can with other teachers, people you don't know.	Friends understand Relate Can't open up to a teacher Trust friend to talk to them Don't know teachers?	Friends understand/relate/ Trustworthy Friends get to know you, teachers don't (relationships)

- **Amendments/additions from member checking with pupil researchers**
- **Additional notes by researcher after member checking**

This excerpt of the transcript shows how I have systematically coded the data through initial and focused coding. It also shows the amendments made as a result of gaining feedback from the pupil researchers during member checking and the additional notes made by me which fed into the development of the final theoretical categories for each focus group (Appendix 21).

The reason for presenting the analysis to the pupil researchers at the focused coding stage of analysis was due to the more concrete nature of these focused codes. At this stage in the analysis, the codes involved very little interpretation and they were still explicitly grounded in the data. Moreover, most of the focused codes used the YP's language. This ensured that the pupil researchers could understand and relate to the analysis in its current state. This also seemed most appropriate as the analysis after this stage involved some understanding of underlying theories and more skills in data analysis which I have received as part of my training to become an EP, as well as having prior experience of research.

My reasons for carrying out member checks were twofold: in line with the views of Charmaz (2014), member checks not only help with the credibility of the findings but they also help to elaborate on the participants' meanings and support the development of the theoretical categories. I was aware that the pupil researchers' views or interpretation of a particular passage may vary from the participant's intended meaning however, it was assumed that their interpretations and understandings would be more in line with the participants, than mine. As a result of this process, changes were made to the coding as shown in the excerpt of the transcript above.

Some of the criticisms of member checking are important to consider at this point in order to justify some of the decisions made. McLeod (2013) suggested that participants may not want to engage in the member checking process due to not seeing the value of taking part. This was a particular concern for me due to the age of the pupil researchers. However, I attempted to overcome this by clearly stating the pupil researchers' involvement in the process from the beginning of the research and clearly explained why member checking was important to me in terms of wanting to accurately represent their views on the topic. This is thought to be particularly important in inclusive studies which ask participants their views on services they receive within an organisation (Doyle, 2007), such as in the current study.

The pupil researchers were also asked some reflexive questions about their involvement in the research, primarily around how they felt about being involved in the research process and what they learnt or gained from it (Appendix 20). This is similar to the idea of member

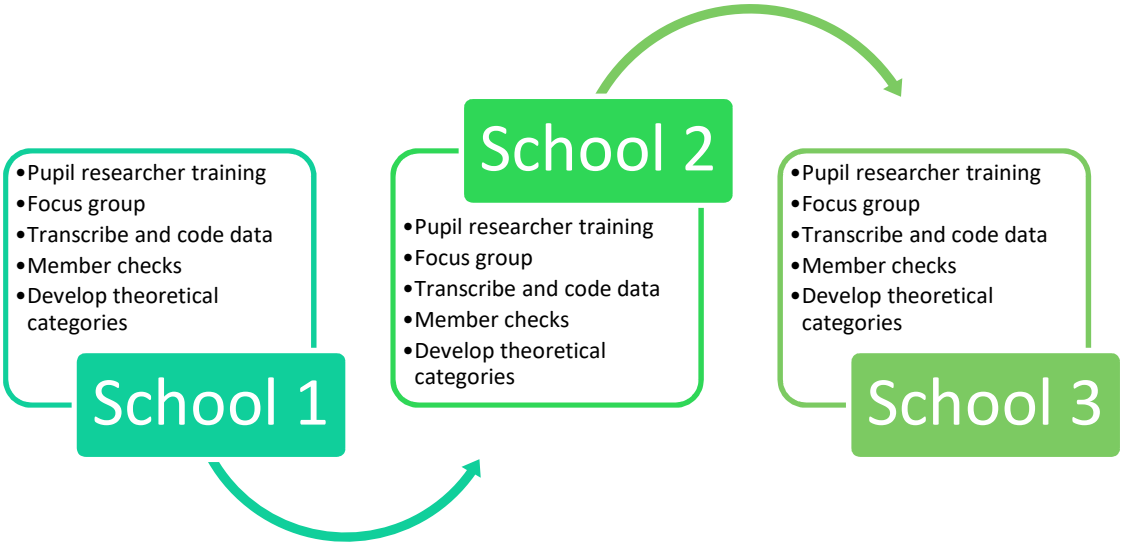
reflections as encouraged by Tracy (2010) as a way of strengthening the analysis. Furthermore, Cho and Trent (2006) talk of transformational validity which encourages participant reflection on how participating in a study impacted on their thoughts and behaviours (Cho and Trent, 2006). The member reflections aimed to gain an insight into how the inclusive research process was for the pupil researchers.

3.6.2.3.3 Theoretical sampling process

Theoretical sampling was used to shape the direction of the research. The process can begin once some starting theoretical categories have been developed from the focused codes; it aims to refine the emerging categories by finding links between them (Charmaz, 2014) (see Appendix 21). More data can then be gathered to check and elaborate on them further. In the current study, the theoretical categories were explored further in different schools and with new pupil researchers and participants. The final research questions were re-developed based on the overarching theoretical categories that emerged from the data analysis. Theoretical sampling should stop when saturation has been reached (Charmaz, 2014).

Breckenridge et al (2009) highlight the importance of describing the process of theoretical sampling in their write up of research, as this has often been neglected. The audit trail should explain how emerging categories are developed however, there is little guidance in the literature regarding how theoretical sampling should take place within a study (Draucker et al, 2007).

Figure 3: Data collection and analysis process



The diagram above shows how the study moved from school to school once the theoretical categories had emerged through data analysis. The theoretical categories that emerged from the focus group in school 1 were then used as the starting point for the pupil researchers to develop questions for the focus group in school 2. The data from school 2 was then analysed and the theoretical categories that emerged were again used by the pupil researchers in school 3 to develop the questions for their focus group. Finally, once the data from school 3 was analysed all of the data was analysed and compared as a whole to create overarching theoretical categories. Appendix 21 shows how the questions for each focus group were developed from the theoretical categories which emerged from the previous focus group.

3.6.2.4 Semi-structured interview with SENCO: data collection and analysis

The following section turns to how the supplementary data from the SENCOs was collected and analysed.

3.6.2.4.1 Semi-structured interview with SENCO data collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with the school SENCOs. The main purpose of this interview was to gain an alternative perspective to the data collected from the focus group in order to identify what adults in schools are failing to acknowledge about

YP's help-seeking behaviours. It also aimed to identify any gaps between the views of the SENCOs and what was documented in the school policies.

It was important that informed consent was initially gained from the SENCO, as well as the head teacher, as there is only one SENCO within a given setting. The SENCO is therefore more easily identifiable to other members of the school community when the findings were fed back. To ensure that the limits to their anonymity were explained fully, in addition to this being clearly stated on the information sheet and consent form, I also visited the SENCO in school to discuss the research further and ensure that the consent that was given was fully informed.

Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility whilst following a topic guide (Bryman, 2016). A topic guide was developed (Appendix 18) which aimed to gain the SENCO's perspective regarding how staff promote and support students' emotional well-being in school. With SENCOs playing an important role in schools, often at a strategic level (DfE/DoH, 2015), the interview allowed me an insight into how they viewed the school's provision for supporting the emotional well-being of their students.

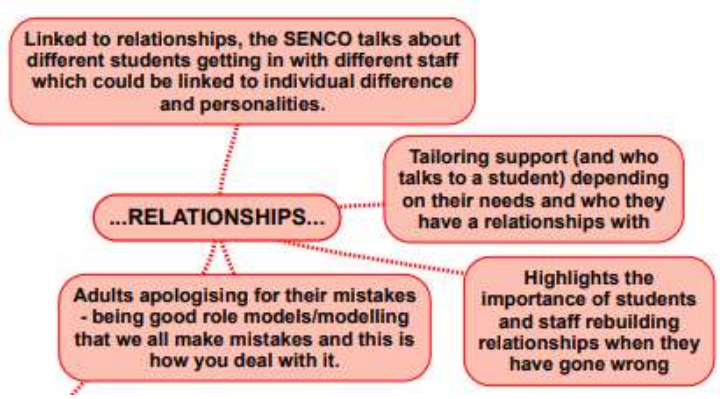
3.6.2.4.2 Analysis of data from SENCO interviews

As the SENCO interviews were a supplementary source of data and not the main focus of the research, a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013) was used to analyse the data collected from the SENCO interviews. This involved drawing out the main themes from each of the SENCO interviews and comparing them with the other SENCO interviews to identify any common or overlapping themes.

Memos continued to be made throughout transcribing the interviews in order to make comparisons with the YP's views. Below shows an excerpt of the SENCO interview from school 1 and the themes that were drawn out.

Speaker	Comments	Theme
Interviewer	Ok	
SENCO	And sometimes, those relationships…..are quite strong…… so…. So sometimes those children they work with might actually go to a TA	Relationships (staff and pupils)
Interviewer	Ok yeah	
SENCO	With something, um… either, you either just something that they might be having a bit of a meltdown about sort of they've fallen out with somebody, uh or, you know, or it might even be safeguarding sort of thing so…	Meeting emotional needs Recognises range of problems
Interviewer	Ok ok…..do you think that's because of the relationship they've already got with them?	
SENCO	Yep, yep because this, this sort of area here um is the student support base, which we're in now, is seen as a safe place for somebody..	Safe space – school organisation

Mindmaps were then produced to help group the themes that had emerged from the interview data in each school. Below shows the comments from the SENCO in school 1 around the theme of relationships.



The interview data from all three schools were compared and overall themes are presented in the findings chapter.

3.6.2.5 School policies: data collection and analysis

Glaser and Strauss (1967) saw documents as useful to analyse when using grounded theory in the social sciences. It is also a fairly common form of data within this methodology (Ralph, Birks and Chapman, 2014). 'Extant documents' are documents which are already in existence within organisations such as policies and government reports which are readily available (Charmaz, 2014).

Schools are legally required to have certain policy documents which aim to set out guidance for schools in line with key legislation (DfE, 2014). Charmaz (2014) suggests that policy documents attempt to clearly establish a hierarchy for managing a range of organisational procedures and serve to protect an organisation from legalities (Charmaz, 2014). I was interested in how the school policies relate to practice in terms of emotional well-being support, and how this compared to the views of the YP in the study.

3.6.2.5.1 Collecting relevant school policies for analysis

A priori purposive sampling approach (Hood, 2007) was also used to identify the school policies that were analysed. The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations (Legislation.gov.uk, 2016) and the DfE (2018) state what information maintained schools and academies in England should provide online. This enabled me to view and download the selected school policies from the participating school's websites. Policies were selected on the basis of whether they referred to the following criteria:

- Involved SEND provision or procedures
- Referred to student welfare or pastoral care
- Linked to the safeguarding of students.

Policies around management and organisational systems and assessment were excluded from the sample. Therefore, the following policies were retrieved from the school websites and included in this analysis:

Table 4: School policies analysed

School 1	School 2	School 3
1. Anti-Bullying Policy 2. Behaviour for Learning Policy 3. Child Protection Policy 4. Equality and Diversity Policy 5. Relationship and Sex Education Policy 6. SEN and Disabilities Policy 7. Substance Misuse Policy	1. Accessibility Policy 2. Anti-Bullying Policy 3. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 4. Behaviour Policy 5. Attendance Policy 6. SEN and Disability Information Report and Policy	1. Anti-Bullying Policy 2. Attendance Policy 3. Behaviour Policy 4. Equalities Act Statement 5. Exclusion Policy 6. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 7. Sex and Relationship Education Policy 8. Special Educational Needs Policy

3.6.2.5.2 Analysis of school policies

When looking at documents as data, grounded theorist researchers look at a range of factors including content, authors and production (Charmaz, 2014). Prior (2008; 2011) suggests looking at what documents do as oppose to just what is in them. Charmaz (2014) also pointed out that documents, particularly policies, follow a typical format or conventions and can therefore be compared to other documents, such as, other policies in the school, policies in other schools and wider documents from which it has derived, for example, the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) or government green papers.

It is important to clarify, that although the use of extant data in research has been seen to be more objective, these documents are still socially constructed as they contain the views and discourses of others (Charmaz, 2014). Within the current study, the socially constructed nature of the school policies was helpful in terms of identifying:

- how they define certain concepts within the policies;
- their record and monitoring procedures;
- and how they justify and foretell actions.

Charmaz (2014) points out that what is missing and not written in these documents should also be of interest to the researcher.

In order to analyse the school policies selected in each school, I developed a table using reworded versions of questions developed by Charmaz (2014) provided as a way of studying documents; some were more relevant than others when studying school policy documents and many of the questions overlapped. These questions intended to uncover the intentions and purpose of the policies, how they were produced and who for, what they do not include and how they link to wider documents and key legislation.

Ralph et al (2014) suggest that the types of questions proposed by Charmaz (2014) helps the researcher to interact with and understand the data prior to analysis. Once analysed, this was then compared with the views of the SENCO and the YP to identify the gaps in the understanding of adults and organisations around how best the emotional well-being of YP can be promoted and supported in schools. Therefore, using these questions as an analytic tool followed by a thematic analysis seemed appropriate in drawing out the relevant similarities and differences. The questions used were as follows:

1. What its originators intended to accomplish
2. Process of producing
3. What/ who does it affect?
4. How do various audiences interpret it?
5. How, when and to what extent these audiences use this document?
6. Purpose – what does it explain/justify/foretell actions?
7. What does it not say?
8. Compare/contrast with wider documents

(Adapted from Charmaz, 2014 pp. 53-54)

3.7 Feedback to schools

I was aware that many of the comments made by the YP throughout my study could be very critical of school practices and individual members of staff. Fisher (2014) acknowledges that

this needs to be managed sensitively by the researcher. In order to overcome this when providing feedback to schools, the research findings were fed back to school as an overall analysis of the findings from all three schools. This helped to ensure that no particular setting, member of staff, pupil or participant could be identified.

NCB (2011) suggests that feedback to YP on the findings should be in an appropriate and accessible format for their age and stage of development. Separate and accessible feedback to schools and participants included information on the key findings and the potential implications of these findings for schools and EP practice.

Feeding back and sharing the findings with school staff intended to challenge and motivate them to improve their current practice as recommended by Kadi-Hanifi and colleagues (2014).

3.8 Summary

This chapter has detailed the methodological approach and methods used within the current study. It detailed the constructivist grounded theory approach used and explained the continuous data collection and data analysis process. The following chapter presents the findings from the current study. The findings are presented using quotes from the YP themselves and diagrams showing the overarching theoretical categories that evolved.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of this study. It is organised in the following order:

- Findings from focus groups: overarching theoretical categories
- Findings from SENCO interviews: key themes
- Findings from analysis of school policies: key themes

4.2 Findings from focus groups: overarching theoretical categories

The focus group findings are presented by first outlining the collective overarching theoretical categories from all three schools. The following sections then present each of these overarching categories and subcategories, followed by a description and explanatory quotes from the transcripts. Appendix 26 shows how the theoretical categories from each focus group were combined to develop the overarching theoretical categories. Mind maps showing how the theoretical categories emerged from the focus codes from each focus group can be found in Appendices 23, 24 and 25. Throughout the chapter pseudonyms, which were chosen by the YP, will be used to aid anonymity.

Figure 4 below shows the overarching theoretical categories that will be discussed in more detail. These will be discussed in order of strength of the category, which was based upon how frequently it was discussed within the focus groups.

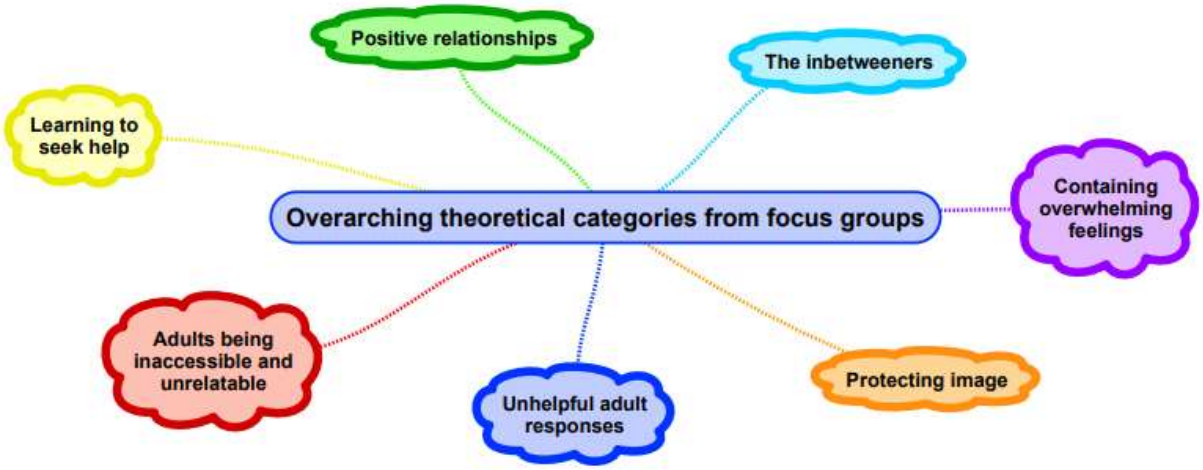


Figure 4: Overarching theoretical categories mind map

4.2.1 Positive relationships

This theoretical category was the strongest category found during data analysis. All of the YP throughout the three focus groups discussed the importance of their relationships with key adults in school as important to their emotional needs and their help-seeking behaviours. *Figure 5* below shows the different aspects of positive relationships which were discussed. The findings for each of these will be illustrated below.

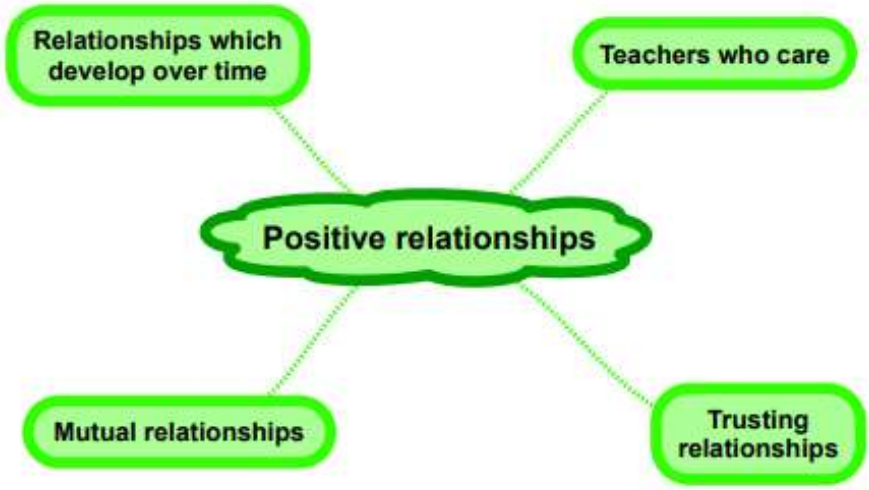


Figure 5: Positive relationships mind map

4.2.1.1 Teachers who care

Below, Luke explains how his relationship with one adult developed due to the teacher showing an interest in him as an individual and how this now helps support his emotional well-being.

> *"If I needed to tell anyone, it would probably be my Maths teacher only……because me and my Maths teacher have……like…..the biggest bond in the world…….because she is better than any other teacher cause she came and asked . . . a lot about me……when I was ill one day . . . and they told Miss a lot of stuff about me and how I do horse riding and how I love horses and stuff so……..I got, like so close to my teacher and now I know that I have someone to talk to if I'm upset" (Luke).*

Ninja also describes her relationship with one particular adult in school. She describes this adult as someone she can depend on and as someone who provides ongoing support due to her taking an interest in her.

> *"Miss H…she's just like always there for me…..and like….kinda like gets on with me and like, she kinda helps me through everything" (Ninja).*

> *"Yeah, cause she like listens to all my problems and then she'll like help me with certain things and things" (Ninja).*

These relationships between adults and YP in school seem central to facilitating help-seeking in YP for problems which impact on their emotional well-being. These relationships appear to develop when the teachers have shown an interest and made an effort to get to know the YP as individuals. The YP suggest that this shows that the adults care about them.

4.2.1.2 Trusting relationships

Trust was a key theme throughout this theoretical category. The YP spoke of occasions when an adult has told another adult what the YP has told them and subsequently this has

made the situation worse. The YP also talked about adults not staying true to their word and doing what they say they will.

> *"No adults in school I trust, cause they wouldn't keep it a secret" (Boogyman).*

> *"..don't just say you'll do something…when….they……don't." (Julie).*

Concerns around trust was a reason for not seeking help from adults in school. Many of the YP mentioned family members as preferred adults to seek emotional support or help from, for reasons around trust and the quality of their relationship.

> *"I would also go to family member . . . because……um obviously you know THEM really really well cause they're your family…and you can trust….." (Julie).*

The comments above highlight the importance of these factors to adolescent help-seeking.

4.2.1.3 Mutual relationships

When discussing who the YP feel comfortable talking to about their problems or emotions, they referred to talking to people with whom they have mutual relationships with.

> *"I would only speak to my eldest brother because he trusts me and I trust him…..and he'll tell me all of his secrets" (Monkey).*

Although Monkey is talking about his brother in the excerpt above, it is helpful to know that this quality facilitates help-seeking behaviour in adolescents. The YP also referred to relationships with adults as needing to be mutual in order for them to confide in them with their emotional problems in school. Abbie described this in the following way:

> *"I um find, that um, that before, if I go to speak to a teacher, I have to, they have to earn my trust as well as I need to earn their trust" (Abbie).*

In Abbie's comment above she appears to recognise positive relationships as reciprocal. Earning trust suggests that these relationships require time to develop.

4.2.1.4 Relationships which develop over time

Will talked about relationships with adults developing over time which the other YP in his focus group were in agreement with:

> *"If you've gone to them for a few other things, like, they will understand more about you….. and and they can kind of understand that that's you and that's your kinda like personality and they will try to actually help and they will try to help you" (Will).*

Throughout the three focus groups, most of the YP reported that they preferred to seek help from an adult they have built a relationship with over time rather than an adult who does not know them well.

> *"…Like I would rather go to a teacher who I know, who I've seen….probably since the start of the year…" (Julie).*

> *"I would probably go to a particular adult in school that I trust, I wouldn't talk about it to everyone, like every single adult" (Cherry).*

Above, Julie highlights how long these relationships can take to develop and Cherry further highlights the importance of trust in her relationships with adults in school.

4.2.2 The inbetweeners

I chose to name this category the inbetweeners as I felt that this term reflected the dilemma the YP spoke of throughout the three focus groups. This theoretical category highlights the conflict many of the YP are experiencing at this stage of their lives between wanting to solve problems themselves as they strive to be more independent, and still depending on adults to help them with some problems due to their lack of experience and underdeveloped skills. This category illustrates this conflict as a continuum. *Figure 6* below shows the focused

codes that repeatedly emerged during the data analysis to form this theoretical category. These will be discussed in turn below.

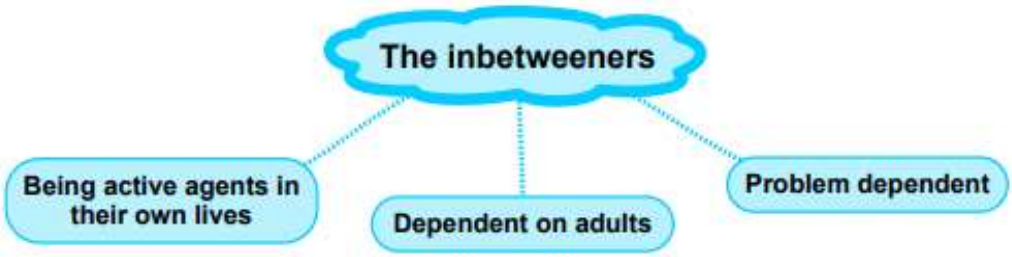


Figure 6: The inbetweeners mind map

4.2.2.1 Being active agents in their own lives

The YP repeatedly talked about wanting adults to empower them to solve their own problems. Often they talked about wanting support and guidance from adults to do this.

> *"…they just helped me through the whole situation and made me feel better in myself and better how I could…….um…..deal with the problem, myself. As in, in a completely different way than I did before. So they gave me examples, all sorts like that" (Abbie).*

When it came to social difficulties, Emily explains how she often requires adult support to resolve a problem but wants to be a part of the solution:

> *"I just wish that they would get, every, single, part of the story as possible like, not just the two parts that are arguing, but the parts of everyone around them. Cause then we'll be able to fix it better" (Emily).*

Below, Monkey showed an interest in learning to resolve and manage his own problems or emotional discomfort with guidance from adults:

> *"Get the teachers to help you……I'd like them to help you, but you do it yourself" (Monkey).*

"Yeh" (Julie).

"Uh so, if the teacher helps you, not actually do it for you then you can start doing it yourself" (Monkey).

Although many of the YP throughout the three focus groups talked about being empowered to solve and manage their own difficulties, many of them referred to adults guiding them through this. Above, Monkey suggests that developing this skill will help him in the future.

4.2.2.2 Dependent on adults

Despite the excerpts in the section above, at other times throughout the three focus groups, the YP spoke of wanting adults to 'fix' things for them:

"I wouldn't worry I would just like have a note because like then…the teachers can sort it out" (Elephant).

"We want them to sort it out" (Julie).

Elephant's comment above suggests that he does not want any involvement in how his problem is resolved, he just wants adults to deal with it and inform him of the outcome. The YP did not feel confident in managing some problems themselves and felt that they needed adult intervention. For example, Will talks about a bullying problem as an issue that adults can sort out for him:

"…you can kinda like go to a teacher and tell them about it and they can sort it out" (Will).

Similarly, Grant suggests that seeking help from adults in school for problems could also be associated with a sense of justice and seeing adults as holding the power to resolve injustice or unfairness. Grant's comments suggest this below:

"It depends what sort of problem…….cause like if it's personal, like, and, you know, so it, like you don't, you just wanna keep it to meself" (Grant).
"But if it wasn't like…" (Julie).
"If someone had done summit to me then yeah I'll just say" (Grant).

"Well yeah like Grant and Cherry are saying…it depends on what the problem is, like if someone's done something to you and you really weren't happy about it, then I would tell an adult, but if it's something like, that you prefer not to talk about, I'd rather just keep it to myself…" (Julie).

In the first quote above, Grant suggests that he would have no problem telling an adult in school if someone else had done something wrong towards him. This was a conflicting statement as previously Grant had mentioned that he preferred sorting problems out himself or would only confide in family members. This suggests that Grant considers carefully whether to solve a problem himself or seek support from adults.

Being more dependent on adults appeared to be associated with gaining help and emotional support or containment. This therefore has significant overlaps with the category ***containing overwhelming feelings*** presented in section 4.2.3. Whether the YP wanted problems 'fixing' for them or to be empowered to sort the problem out themselves depended upon a range of factors including; individual differences and was problem dependent.

4.2.2.3 Problem dependent

The YP discussed the types of problems they might seek help for from an adult in school and the types of problems they would not. In focus group 2, there were numerous mentions of 'bad' problems which were not really explored further by the YP as they seemed unable to explain what was meant by a 'bad' problem. Furthermore, the pupil researchers did not encourage an explanation of what the participants meant by a 'bad' problem.

"If things were bad, then you tell" (Monkey)

"Well if it was like something bad I would like tell a teacher" (Elephant).

Their perceptions of 'bad' were not discussed in much detail however, Julie's comment below expands on the concept of this:

"But then like you said it's a secret, but it's not a good secret, as in like they told you something that's bad, it's hard to decide if you should keep it to yourself or not" (Julie).

This suggests there are 'good' and 'bad' secrets. I wondered whether Julie was referring to possible safeguarding issues here as opposed to a 'good' secret which might be perceived as exciting gossip. This statement further suggests that YP go through a difficult decision-making process as to whether they should or should not seek help from an adult in school regarding the problems or conflicts they face.

4.2.3 Containing overwhelming feelings

This theoretical category primarily came about through discussions in focus group 1 and 3. It refers to the YP's discussions around going to a trusted adult when they are experiencing overwhelming negative emotions and they do not know how to manage them. It therefore also links closely to the theoretical category ***relationships*** which was discussed in section 4.2.1. *Figure 7* below shows the areas discussed within this category.

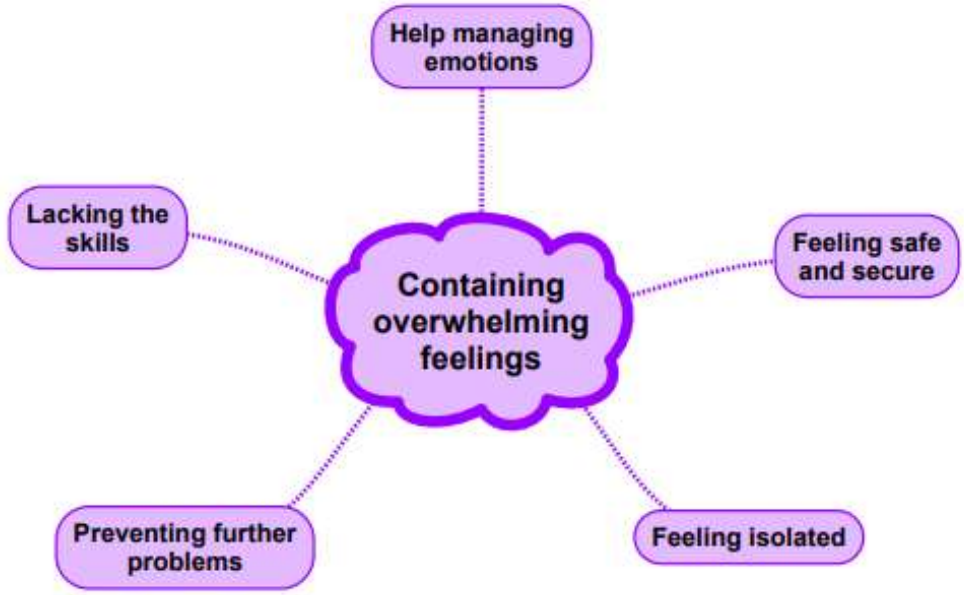


Figure 7: Containing overwhelming feelings mind map

4.2.3.1 Help managing emotions

When YP spoke of feeling overwhelmed with their emotions, many of them referred to talking about a problem with an adult, or off-loading, which in turn helped them to feel better, even if the problem was still unresolved. Below, Hannah talks about her experience of this:

> *"When you're emotional and in that place, where you don't really wanna like go through it you just wanna let it all out . . . and the next time, they'll be like 'oh last time' or they'll ask you are you in the mood for talking about what happened like yesterday or summing. And then if you are you can just like talk to them and then it'll get fixed. Or it might not, but you'll feel better about it" (Hannah).*

> *"…so when I've come to the support base in an absolute state in tears because somethings gone wrong and I wasn't ready for it, they would….sit me down and give me a drink of water and just be like, it's okay and talk me through the problem make sure I came out ok. And was in a learning state so I didn't stop any learning" (Emily).*

In the excerpt above, Emily suggests that it is not until she had calmed down and talked through the problem that she felt ready to learn. However, there were many conflicting statements made by the YP. Some of the YP said that they want to talk to an adult when they are feeling overwhelmed with their emotions, whereas others said that they prefer not to talk about it until they have had a chance to calm down.

> *"It's easier to talk when it happens, cause then you remember it all clearly and it's easier to sort it out. But afterwards, it's kinda like you remember you're still angry you're still full of the emotion but you don't remember exactly what happened so it's harder to resolve" (Emily).*

The conflicting nature of Hannah and Emily's comments above perhaps highlight the individual differences between YP. It also indicates that whether a YP wants to talk about a problem, or not, depends on the type of problem and the type and strength of the emotion.

Similar to Emily's comment above, Julie's statement below suggests that sometimes problems seem 'bad' but they might not be at a later time or when the YP is feeling calmer.

> *"It does it does…….if it's something that you think is bad but then, in reality it's not really that bad" (Julie).*

4.2.3.2 Feeling safe and secure

The YP also talked about the need to feel safe and secure when they are experiencing emotional turmoil; as explained by Will and Emily when they turn to pastoral staff in school.

> *"…like a student support….that makes you like more secure and makes you feel like ahh I talk to these people about stuff that makes me nervous, and they can help me" (Will).*

"…you feel safer with them (Personal Development teachers) because they're not all clamped down . . . you can ask any question and they will just answer it freely and you don't have to worry about what you say, cause they won't judge you" (Emily).

These feelings of safety and security link with the importance of having ***positive relationships*** with adults in school. Emily also highlights the importance of adults being non-judgemental as helping her to feel safe. The others in focus group 1 also agreed with this statement.

4.2.3.3 Feeling isolated

The excerpts below from Spiderman describe his intense and uncomfortable feelings around the bullying he has experienced in school.

"I just feel like I'm not part of this school and just some random idiot who just joined the school for no reason and I don't like it" (Spiderman).

"I feel like I'm in prison, a prison cell and all my life's been stripped away" (Spiderman).

Spiderman talked about keeping these feelings to himself whereas The Doctor responded to Spiderman's comments and expanded on them by talking about her need to talk about her emotions to avoid feeling alone.

"Sometimes I feel like if I can't talk to people I feel alone" (The Doctor).

These comments suggest that YP need to talk to adults in school about their emotions in order to feel less isolated.

4.2.3.4 Preventing further problems

There were some interesting discussions around why seeking support from an adult in school can be helpful in preventing the problem getting worse or dealing with the emotions in an unhelpful way. The Doctor explains this below:

> *"…if I've got feelings that I can't deal with I have to go and tell an adult, I struggle keeping them in and it's hard because if I keep them in all day without telling an adult to help me, I can um, when I get home I take it out on my family and I don't like that" (The Doctor).*

The excerpt above talks about how seeking help or support from an adult in school can prevent other important relationships from breaking down or being damaged. Below, Will explains how adults can help to resolve difficulties in a more sensible way than perhaps his friends would encourage him to.

> *"you can kinda like go to a teacher and tell them about it and they can sort it out. With your friends, they kinda find that, they want to help in their own way and…..and you kinda wanna keep them out of it in case what they want to do will get you in trouble. (Will).*

4.2.3.5 Lacking the skills

Many of the exerts above suggest that these YP are not feeling well equipped to manage these more overwhelming feelings and require support and guidance in doing so.

> *"let your feelings free and let people know how you truly feel and not bottle it up inside cause then you…that just makes it worse" (The Doctor).*

Some of the YP in the focus group were quite adamant that they preferred not to seek help from adults in school and preferred to manage their emotions and problems independently.

"I don't think I deal with them well on my own and would probably deal with them (emotions) better with an adult" (Ninja).

On her reflection of this, Ninja acknowledged her lacking skills and ability to be able to do this independently despite often saying that she preferred to keep things to herself.

4.2.4 Protecting image

This category came through as very important to all of the YP in schools 1 and 2. It was mentioned repeatedly and spoke about emotively. It appeared to be as much about protecting their image and reputation from their peers as it was from the adults in school. *Figure 8* shows the important aspects of this theoretical category which are presented in turn below.

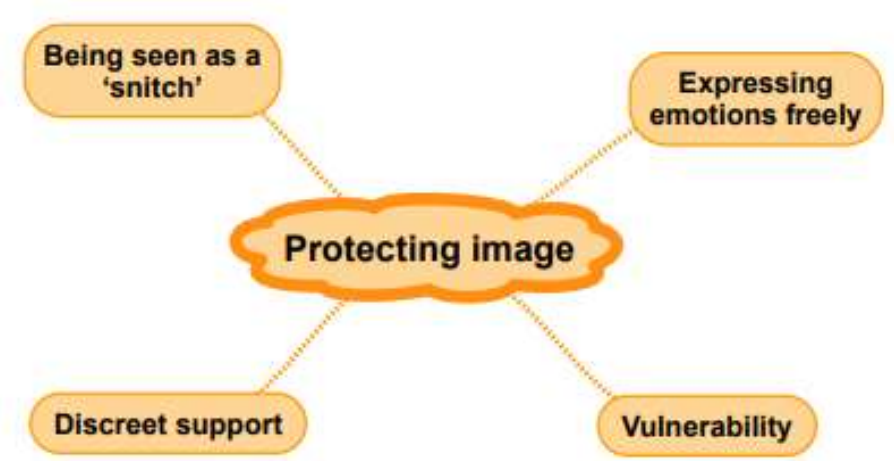


Figure 8: Protecting image mind map

4.2.4.1 Expressing emotions freely

Many of the YP, particularly those in focus group 1, talked about needing to be able to express their emotions freely, which is something they do not always feel they can do around adults.

"….with your friends, you can swear, you can scream at them, but with teachers, they'll, they'll just tell you off if you say a bad, naughty word or something. It's not

that fun or easier, it's easier if you let it all out. But you can't let it all out with teachers" (Emily).

"I feel like sometimes when you talk to teachers you have to kind of like, kind of like, put on a different act because, like they're teachers and like you can't say certain things. So it's kind of like putting on, like a kind of mask of some sort and then like……but with your friends they kinda take you for who you are, so you can talk…." (Hannah).

Hannah and Emily suggest that 'letting it all out' makes them feel better but with adults in school they have to pretend to be okay or act very differently. Emily suggests that this is to avoid getting into trouble, whereas Hannah's comment indicates that it could be about her reputation and how she is viewed by the adults in school.

4.2.4.2 Vulnerability

Being seen by their peers when adults are supporting them was another concern for the YP. This was due to how this makes them feel and was linked to being seen by others as vulnerable.

"If they talked to you in front of your friends then….it would be a bit like…." (Julie).
"Embarrassed" (Monkey).
"Awkward" (Grant).

Hannah talks more specifically about how it feels when her peers see her having a meltdown and she is not removed from the situation by an adult:

"when you've like, had like a sort of like a meltdown or something in class……people kinda like, nobody really takes you out of that situation, so then people kinda stare at you and stuff" (Hannah).

Emily explains this further:

"So if you did (have a meltdown) when you're in a classroom, inside I feel so, like, embarrassed cause I feel like, everyone's gonna judge me like, everyone's gonna, like be thinking why is that girl even here, why is she, why is she existing, she shouldn't be here. And it makes me feel so upset, and then, I like feel really cautious about what I'm doing because I don't want to to…..see me upset, I don't want them to see me as a weakling because I don't want to be the person who's easy prey" (Emily).

Both Hannah and Emily went on to talk about how they expect adults to take them out of these situations as they have concerns that this will impact on their relationships or reputations with their peers. They were suggesting that adults do not respect this concern of theirs and in turn, this makes them feel more vulnerable.

The Doctor explains that although she feels that adult support is more helpful than support from her friends, she is aware that her peers may judge her for choosing to seek adult support.

"I think that some people might find me like …..weird in a way because I am asking a teacher to help with my emotions and like not my friends cause….friends can also help but it doesn't always help…" (The Doctor).

4.2.4.3 Discreet support

As a result of YP feeling vulnerable when seeking adult help for their emotions, Julie discussed with others in her group how she would like adults in school to be more discreet in the support they offer, particularly around personal and more confidential difficulties. Three of the other participants in this focus group were in agreement with her.

"Yeah I prefer to get a note in class so you know you have to go out, so it's more private" (Julie).

"…like really discreetly so that no one knows that you are struggling, and help you" (Emily).

During member checking in school 1, the pupil researchers elaborated on this by explaining that they want adults in school to approach them and provide support in a discreet way as they do not want everyone looking at them.

4.2.4.4 Being seen as a 'snitch'

Finally, a few of the YP talked about not wanting to be seen as a 'snitch' if they did seek help from an adult in school. They talked about a 'snitch' as being someone who told on others. This appeared to be important for their overall image and sustaining relationships with their peers. Interestingly, this concern of being seen as a snitch was only mentioned in one of the focus groups by the three boys in the group.

"Uh….I'd rather not be known like as a snitch but….." (Grant)

"Cause if like the people that like, done it out of school was there, then they would think you've snitched or something" (Monkey).

The above comment from Grant highlights that YP consider very carefully about whether to seek help or not. Monkey supports this statement by suggesting that this could damage his reputation with his peers.

4.2.5 Unhelpful adult responses

This category reflects what YP perceive to be unhelpful adult responses. Many of these are based upon YP's previous experiences of help-seeking from adults in school and, in some cases, are negatively impacting on their intentions to seek help for future difficulties. *Figure 9* below shows the different concepts within this category and the findings from each will be presented in turn.

Figure 9: Unhelpful adult responses mind map

4.2.5.1 Adults doing nothing

Most of the YP felt that when they sought help from adults in school for a problem which caused them emotional distress, adults often responded by doing nothing.

> *"Again, I think just keep it in because it's……used to being…there's no point like telling people cause…they won't do anything about it, I just keep it in myself and just….." (Spice).*

In the excerpt above, Spice chooses not to seek help due to a previous negative experience of seeking help and feels as though nothing was done about it. There was a real helpless tone when the YP were discussing this, which suggested that they wanted to seek help from others but felt that it often was not very helpful.

Ninja's comment below highlights the importance of keeping problems or emotions private and confidential. She suggests that this does not always happen when she confides in an adult in school.

> *"when other teachers know like, they just like make it worse because teachers just do nothing and then like….if you keep it in, then the only person who will know is you" (Ninja).*

"I've been to an adult in school before and they just haven't done nothink" (Grant).

Grant felt particularly let down by adults due to his previous experiences of telling an adult and nothing happening or changing as a result. Many of the other YP agreed with Grant but did not provide any specific examples of this.

They also described resolving problems in their own way as a result of negative experiences of seeking help from adults in school in the past.

"Cause then like, I've told a teacher before like and I've told them that (mumbles)… and they just haven't done anything…….I was like sort it out myself and then I end up getting in trouble and I've told them like what's happ….what's been happening like….." (Grant).

The YP also explained how these previous negative experiences impact on future help-seeking behaviours.

"Yeahhhh…because like if you got help from them once and the second time they were not listening again so there's no point going up to them cause there's other people around you that want to listen to you" (Spice).

Emily spoke about how a previous negative experience impacted on her willingness to seek help from adults in school, even in a new setting:

"In my primary school, we had this teacher who was absolutely horrible to everyone . . . and now when you come to secondary you're like, will this happen again? Will it repeat? And you don't know who's safe to go to" (Emily).

In the excerpt above, Emily speaks about 'safe adults' in terms of who is kind and trustworthy. This has links with the ***positive relationships*** category.

Finally, some of the YP's decision making around whether to seek help from an adult in school is based upon whether they felt that help and support would be forthcoming. This was often depended on the type of problem and their previous experiences of help-seeking.

> *"I would go, go tell the teachers about….what's going on at home and stuff so they can try and help me out, what I wouldn't tell them was about like……to do with, like bullying cause I know they don't do anything about bullying, so I don't go and speak to them about that" (Spice).*

In this excerpt, Spice is very specific about adults in school not responding to reports of bullying or having an impact on bullying when they do become involved.

Below, Grant suggests that when he goes to an adult with a problem, he expects their involvement to have an impact and for it to be resolved quickly.

> *"Yeah all they say is oh yeh we'll look into it, a month later it's still, the same things happening, no change" (Grant).*

Monkey clarifies that adults acting on a YP's problem can show that they understand:

> *"You know they've understood when they've actually done something about it" (Monkey).*

Monkey's perception is that if adults in school do not resolve YP's problems, it suggests they do not understand the problem or view them as important.

4.2.5.2 Making it worse

In Ninja's comment in section 4.2.5.1 she mentions how adults have the potential to make their problems or feelings worse. Spiderman explains his frustrations below when describing his expectations that adults should be able to resolve problems but how this sometimes does not help at all.

"…they'd (family) never tell the teachers there but they'd (teachers) probably just say there's nothing we can do about it, however there is something they can do about it and tell them (bullies) that they shouldn't do it but . . . sometimes if the teacher tells them not to do it, they'll keep doing it to me" (Spiderman).

This suggests that even if adults do become involved and attempt to resolve a problem, such as bullying, they have very little impact and potentially make the problem worse.

Others also indicated that adults can make things worse when they seek help from them in school:

"and sometimes they like make it worse…and then they'll try and like……say like 'oh you might have this, or this, or this' and then it kinda like just gets more confusing" (Hannah).

"It's nice just to relax and calm yourself down slowly, but if they're rushing you out, it just builds everything up more" (Emily).

Both Hannah and Emily refer to feeling emotionally overwhelmed in the excerpts above. They suggest that adults can make this worse by offering either too much support, leading Hannah to feel confused, or too little support, leading Emily's feelings to escalate.

Emily also talked about how teachers can confuse YP in her school by telling them to do something and then, if they do this, it leads to them getting into trouble.

"Like they tell you, 'take yourself out of the situation' to stop the situation from excelling and then, what you'll do is you will take yourself out of the situation, and then you'll get in trouble for it cause you're not allowed to…" (Emily).

Emily's comments above highlights her confusion in adult's responses and the inconsistent way adults in school sometimes respond to YP's emotional distress.

4.2.6 Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable

This category refers more specifically to the YP' feelings around why adults are often unable to support them appropriately and how this impacts on their emotional well-being. *Figure 10* below show the areas which will be described individually in the following sections.

Figure 10: Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable mind map

4.2.6.1 Adults being inaccessible

The following quotes suggest that adults in school are inaccessible and unavailable when YP seek help from them.

> *"Because the teachers like, they seem too busy and like if I try and talk to them they say "oh hang on a minute" or "go and sit down" and that's….what makes me feel pushed away" (The Doctor).*

> *"Yeah. ……..And I don't like the fact of how I feel if I'm being pushed away….cause it hurts my feelings and that makes me even more upset" (The Doctor).*

"…teachers can be really annoying and just like 'well you have to get on with it, cause that's just life you gotta learn that not everything can go your way and it's not all about you' and then, in my head I will go, 'arghhh you annoying person, I need help, I can't do this and you're not helping me at all'!" (Emily)

These comments show YP's frustrations around not being able to get the support they need from adults in school when they have previously sought help. This is likely to discourage them from seeking help in the future and negatively impacts their emotional well-being.

4.2.6.2. Adults being unrelatable

The YP discussed how they felt that issues perceived as 'smaller' are often disregarded by adults in school leading to YP not seeking help.

"If it was only a little thing so like um if it was just like a little tiny thing that they (bullies) were saying that I did I wouldn't really say that to a teacher because they'd think that it was not necessary just to go up to them and tell them that. So that's why I wouldn't tell them the smallest things" (Spiderman).

…..

"But the smallest things make the biggest cuts" (Luke).

The conversation above between Spiderman and Luke highlights the importance of adults taking YP's difficulties seriously, regardless of the perceived significance of the problem.

Ninja explains this further and highlights the response offered to her by an adult when she had a similar experience. As a result of not relating to Ninja's problem and taking it seriously, the adult did not respond to the problem.

"like somethings like maybe happened and I went to this teacher and then they said oh yeah um…..it's not that big of a problem….so we're not going to do anything" (Ninja).

In addition to this, the YP spoke of times when adults did not appear to understand the emotional impact of what might have seemed, to adults, like a trivial problem:

> *"…Yeh like if there was a silly argument and you were really, really annoyed about it but they just thought 'well it's a silly argument so it's not really anything that we can do' so….but to you it felt like something that was really annoying" (Julie).*

The comments above suggest that adults find it hard to relate to adolescent problems and perhaps have forgotten what this developmental stage was like. Abbie's comment below supports this by talking about teachers not being able to relate to her problems like her friends can:

> *"My friends can be more understanding than teachers because they know what you're going through" (Abbie).*

Finally, in the excerpt below, Emily indicates her understanding of the role of teachers and why they are unable to relate to YP. Although she was the only YP to raise this, others in the focus group nodded in agreement.

> *"…teachers, they're good at teaching they're not good at understanding, they're not paid to understand and help problems, they get paid to give us facts not to help with our feelings" (Emily).*

4.2.7 Learning to seek help

This category emerged as a result of the member checking process with the pupil researchers in school 3. The pupil researchers felt strongly that the discussion in their focus group was around the process of learning to seek help. *Figure 11* below shows the two focused codes which emerged. The data to support these findings are then highlighted below.

Figure 11: Learning to seek help mind map

4.2.7.1 Overcoming the unknowns of seeking help

The YP appeared to be fearful of seeking help from adults in school. In the excerpt below, Spiderman refers to his fear as not being able to 'say it' to adults whereas Ninja finds the process of talking to adults in school as embarrassing and scary.

> *"Um I feel like I don't really tell any teacher, I always keep it in and feel like uh I go to a teacher, I feel like, that um, basically, I can't say it and I feel like, I just , I just gotta keep it in….forever, and just let it happen" (Spiderman).*

> *"Uh the thing is, I just don't like talking to teachers because I find it like embarrassing and I feel like kinda like……I just don't like going up to teachers and talking to them cause I feel like scared of them and stuff" (Ninja).*

The Doctor also talked about feeling scared to seek help from adults and explains that this is through fear of what might happen.

> *"So I tell most adults to help me and sometimes I keep it in because I don't know if they're gonna help you or not….so I just feel scared about what they're gonna say to me, or what they're gonna actually do to help me" (The Doctor).*

Throughout the focus group, Spiderman kept referring to his fear of telling adults in school about being bullied and his overwhelming emotions which were associated with this. He

also talked about keeping these feelings and problems private and only talking to his family. Towards the end of the discussion, Spiderman suggests how he has overcome his fears and inability to ask for help and is now able to confidently confide in others.

> *"So how do you feel now that you're here and you're still being bullied?" (Luke).*
> *"I feel fine because I can actually talk to people that I know or kind of know and tell them what was going on and like….." (Spiderman).*

This excerpt supports the pupil researcher's indication that the YP in this focus group felt as though they have to learn how to seek help from adults in school. In doing so, they need to overcome the unknowns and develop the skills required.

4.2.7.2 Developing the skills

Luke was successfully able to encourage the discussion in focus group 3 and used some helpful prompts to ask The Doctor how she could change how she asks adults for help. Her response to this is given below:

> *"By um, I could try a different way of asking them by saying "oh can you help me I feel anxious or angry" (The Doctor).*

The comment by The Doctor above suggests that sometimes the way that YP ask for help with their emotions does not always lead to the type of support they want. The Doctor then goes onto talk about developing the strength and learning the skills to talk to somebody else about her problems, which has subsequently led to greater success.

> *"Uh there's this one thing that I've taught myself over….a couple of years…..and um I've actually learnt how if, if you think you can't talk to anybody that you know inside you're stronger than that and can talk to people then you can actually deal with your problems a lot easier…" (The Doctor).*

None of the YP in the study referred to having been taught how to seek help but instead suggested that they have taught themselves overtime or with practice. It felt like an important category to emphasise and it will be considered further in the discussion chapter.

4.2.8 Summary

This section has presented the findings from the focus groups. It has highlighted the main theoretical categories found through the data analysis which identifies the factors which are most important to YP when seeking help for their emotional well-being.

Of highest priority is the importance of having **positive relationships** with adults in school. The findings also highlight the conflict YP face between seeking help from adults and managing on their own; this was described as **the inbetweeners**. When YP seek help from adults in school, this appeared to be about **containing their overwhelming feelings.** They talked about needing help from adults to do this.

Protecting their image was also of high importance to the YP in this study. They wanted support to be discreet and to be protected from being seen by their peers when emotionally distressed. Equally they wanted to uphold their reputation to both their peers and their teachers. The YP suggested that **unhelpful adult responses** and **adults being inaccessible and unrelatable** impacted on both their emotional well-being and their future intentions to seek help from adults in school. Finally, the YP helpfully identified that **learning to seek help** for their emotions is required in order to overcome their fears and unknowns about seeking help, as well as developing the skills to be able to explain their emotions and ask for help.

4.3 Interviews with school SENCOs

Within this section, I will summarise the main themes identified through the analysis of the information provided by the school SENCOs. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an alternative perspective of the pastoral and emotional well-being support offered to YP in the three schools and identify what is perceived as most important to the different groups. I then intend to draw out how these compare to the views of the YP in the discussion

chapter. As these interviews were supplementary data, I will not be focusing on them in as much depth as the YP's focus groups.

The findings from the SENCO interview data have been organised into the following themes:

- **Facilitating factors to promote student help-seeking for their emotional well-being**
- **Barriers which inhibit student help-seeking in school for their emotional well-being**
- **Graduated response to emotional support: lack of universal support**
- **Future priorities**

The mind map showing these overarching themes can be found in Appendix 30.

The following sections present these themes with further explanations and quotes from the transcripts.

4.3.1 Facilitating factors to promote student help-seeking for their emotional well-being

Figure 12 below shows the themes which emerged from all three SENCO interviews reflecting their perceptions of what facilitate adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being. The facilitating factors are summarised below.

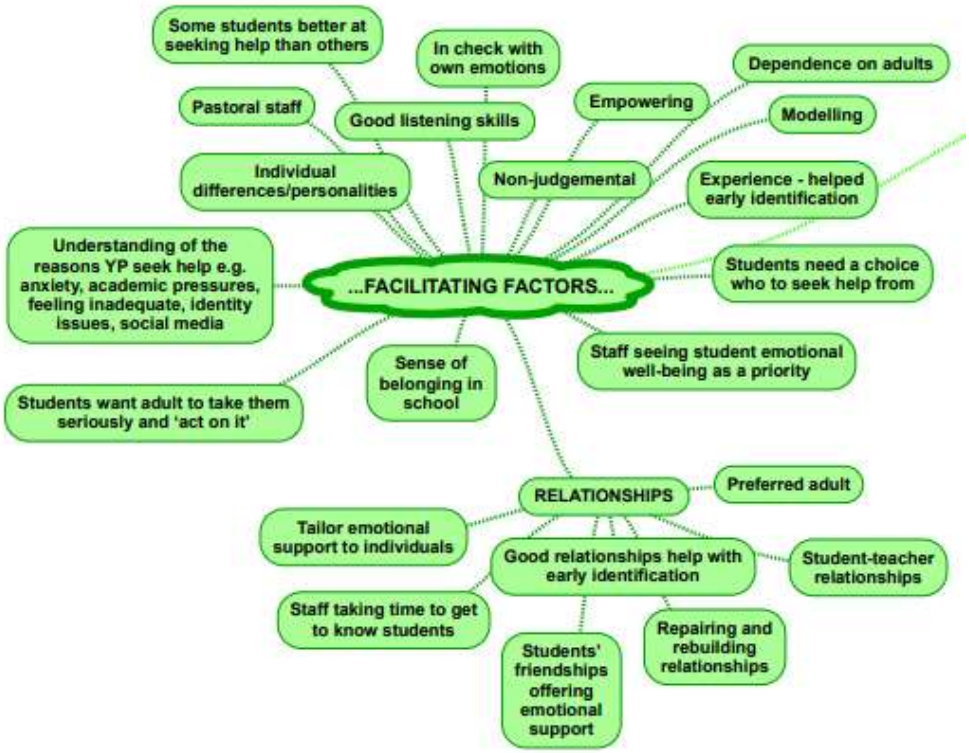


Figure 12: Facilitating factors mind map

4.3.1.1. Relationships

All three SENCOs interviewed as part of this study identified the importance of ***relationships*** when discussing how they support the emotional well-being of their students in school.

The SENCO in school 2 highlighted the importance of friendships to YP in terms of offering support and felt that this would often be the preferred option for secondary aged students. However, it was acknowledged by all of the SENCOs that student-teacher relationships in school are of high importance. SENCO 2 felt that these often depend upon teachers' individual differences and personalities.

> *"…students may have their sort of 4 or 5 members of staff that they'll feel confident talking to, um, but then that's always going to be dependent on personalities and things isn't it" (SENCO 2).*

SENCO 1 also identified that individual students often have a preferred adult in school to talk to and consequently the school try to tailor their emotional support accordingly. It was

felt by the SENCO 2 that pastoral staff in school were often preferred by the students due to their skills in listening; being in check with their own emotions; being non-judgemental of YP's problems; and being able to successfully guide YP to find their own solutions. She also recognised that YP need to feel a sense of belonging in school and felt that this was important to promoting positive emotional well-being throughout the school.

The importance of repairing and re-building relationships between students and adults when they have broken down was also discussed by SENCO 1.

> *"what we want to be looking at is when someone's told you to F off, they need to be coming back to you to apologise and to kind of re-track" (SENCO 1).*

The SENCO suggested that repairing relationships was crucial to ensuring that difficulties do not go unresolved and she felt strongly that this was more effective than giving YP a punishment for their behaviour as it teaches them life-long skills.

All of the SENCOs acknowledged that for these relationships to develop, it was important for staff to take the time to get to know the students and that this helped with identifying when they might need some additional emotional support. Although the SENCOs highlighted keyworkers and other non-teaching pastoral staff as having more time to spend supporting students and getting to know them, it was also recognised that students need a choice about who they seek help from.

> *"But they could go to their pastoral leader….if they preferred or if the tutor felt that it was above them" (SENCO 3).*

4.3.1.2 Other facilitating factors

The SENCOs were able to identify some other facilitating factors that promote and encourage help-seeking in students in school. SENCO 2 felt that although most students at this age still want adults to resolve problems for them, they also appreciated adults

modelling how to resolve difficulties in order for them to learn how to resolve problems for themselves.

> *"Yeah I think they like modelling…..how to respond to things, some students do really appreciate knowing that because quite often they want to be able to change patterns…..they can actually take the control back a little bit" (SENCO 2).*

More experienced staff were considered by SENCO 3 as better at noticing when a young person might require some additional emotional support than less experienced staff. It was not made clear as to whether this experience referred to how long they had been a professional or their experience dealing with emotional and pastoral issues in school.

> *"And I think people are really good at….uh noticing when a student might need a bit of extra support……." (SENCO 3).*

> *"Yeah…..okay, why do you think those differences might be?" (Interviewer).*

> *"Ummmm…….experience" (SENCO 3).*

SENCO 3 believed that the most important factor for YP is that they are listened to when they seek emotional support.

> *"…the main thing that students have a real bugbear about when things go wrong is that they haven't been listened to…there's one thing being listened to isn't there and then it's another thing whether they're taken seriously" (SENCO 3).*

In the excerpt above, SENCO 3 acknowledges that YP want to be truly heard. This means being listened to but also their concerns taken seriously and acted upon.

Finally, SENCO 1 acknowledged that have non-teaching pastoral staff promotes student help-seeking due to their availability throughout the school day.

"...so the advantages of having non-teaching staff, I guess, the advantages are probably obvious but it means that they are able to react, or pick up…" (SENCO 1).

4.3.2 Barriers which inhibit student help-seeking in school for their emotional well-being

The mind map below shows the range of barriers discussed by the SENCOs. These will be summarised below.

Figure 13: Barriers mind map

4.3.2.1 Staff differences

Staff differences were acknowledged by SENCO 1 who recognised that some teachers still prefer a more behaviourist approach, whereby they use punishments and rewards to modify student behaviour, to other teachers and are less aware of students' emotional needs. This contrasts with the comments from SENCO 3 above regarding more experienced staff being more able to notice when YP require additional emotional support however, this highlights the individual differences amongst staff. Furthermore, the difference between

teachers having less time for students' emotional needs and non-teaching staff having more time for this was also identified by SENCO 1.

> *"…the teaching staff are, wouldn't have time, realistically they would not have time to deal with that" (SENCO 1).*

4.3.2.2 The role of supporting student well-being

Although it was felt by all of the SENCOs that all staff knew and saw promoting and supporting student emotional well-being as a priority, they acknowledged the stressors which impacted on this, most specifically the lack of time teaching staff have to dedicate to supporting the emotional needs of their students and the differences in staff experience.

SENCO 1 was the only SENCO to discuss the conflict for teachers between prioritising students' education, due to the internal and external pressures on them to get good results, and prioritising students' emotional well-being in school.

> *"It's, …. We know it's a big issue and I think again we're torn between how we manage that (supporting students emotional well-being) and the pressure on us as a school, …to get those results" (SENCO 1).*

SENCO 2 talked about some staff misunderstanding students' emotional needs and lacking confidence in knowing how to support them; in fear of making things worse.

> "…they feel they'd maybe….get it wrong, or say the wrong thing, so it's developing confidence in other staff" (SENCO 2)

It was also felt by this SENCO that YP have a limited understanding of emotional well-being and therefore may not see the school as trying to promote it.

SENCO 2 highlighted that another barrier could be students' perceptions that some staff do not like them and the impact this has on their emotional well-being:

"…for some children they will have this perception that teachers don't like them. Um and they can take it really personally….. you know, they're sort of self-perception and self-esteem is really poor…" (SENCO 2).

However, it was agreed by all of the SENCOs that staff with poor emotional well-being of their own, struggle to support students. This could explain students' perceptions as mentioned above.

"I'm not sure that staff well-being is necessarily at the forefront" (SENCO 3).

"they may not feel that secure in looking after their own well-being so they don't feel equipped to support students" (SENCO 2).

4.3.3 Graduated response to emotional support: lack of universal support

Figure 14 below shows the themes discussed related to the overarching theme of 'Graduated response to emotional support'. This overarching theme is illustrated below with excerpts from the SENCO interview transcripts.

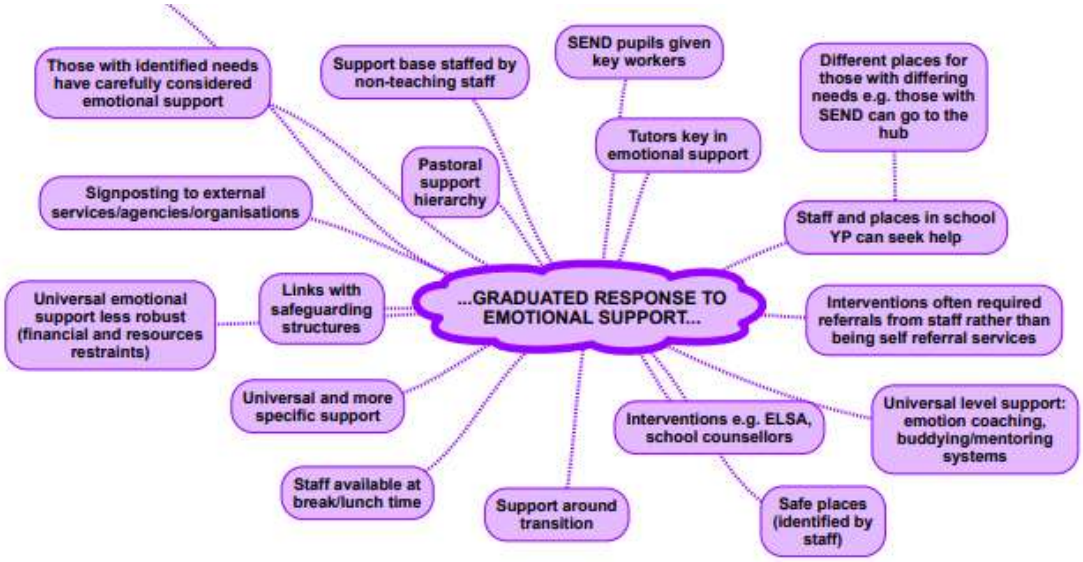


Figure 14: Graduated response to emotional support mind map

The SENCOs discussed the organisation of pastoral support structures in place within their schools to support student's emotional well-being. These were described as a graduated response to emotional support in terms of universal and more targeted provision.

When asked about provision to promote and support emotional well-being in school 2 it was mentioned that a pastoral support hierarchy is clearly in place; with tutors being promoted to students as their first point of contact if they required any additional support with their emotional well-being. There is universal level support in place as well as more specific support for those with more identified needs. At a universal level, support consisted of the use of emotion coaching, as staff had recently received training in this, as well as providing buddying and mentoring systems; particularly around transition.

> *"…myself and the thrive practitioner are both doing the emotion coaching at the moment umm……. it's really good, I mean it's really good, we're doing that though at whole school level um, on the 3rd July as well" (SENCO 2).*

Those with SEND in particular were given link or key workers who often provided emotional support to students. The SENCO in school 1 acknowledged that those students with an identified need have carefully considered support whereas she felt that the universal level support was less robust. Reasons for this included financial and resource restraints.

Within school 1 pastoral and safeguarding structures are linked as these are thought to often overlap. This could be a possible barrier to YP seeking help for their emotional well-being.

> *"So there's quite, there's just a huge overlap in those 5 (4 heads of house and designated safeguarding lead) working together because it's pastoral and it's safeguarding…" (SENCO 1).*

SENCOs in schools 1 and 2 mentioned the wide range of signposting on offer in and around the schools to other services and organisations. Schools also provided in school

interventions such as ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and school counsellors. These interventions required referrals from staff rather than being self-referral services.

All three SENCOs reported that students have a number of places in school where they can go to seek help, as well as a number of staff they can go to. For example, SENCO 1 talked about the support base in their school which is staffed at all times by non-teaching members of staff. The SENCO in school 3 also felt confident that students were aware of where and who they could seek help from. She also mentioned different places in school for those with differing needs, for example, those with SEND needs could seek support from the school 'hub'. Interestingly the SENCO 3 did mention that some students were good at seeking emotional support in school and others were not as good.

> *"some students, who are very good at seeking out help …some people…some students aren't as good… Um at at coming forward and asking" (SENCO 3).*

She felt that those who were better at seeking help would see that the school tries to support student emotional well-being as best they can. Possible reasons for this would need further exploration but could relate to where or who students are expected to seek help from.

> *"So…..if a student is on the SEN register, they could come in here (student hub)….." (SENCO 3).*

Similarly, it was mentioned by the SENCO in school 2 that there are lots of safe places around the school that have been identified by staff; as well as lots of staff being available for students during break and lunch times. SENCO 1 also highlighted break and lunch times as key opportunities for students to talk to adults in school.

> *"Yeah there's um, we kinda all over the school we call them 'safe spaces' so…..there are staff of duty there at break and lunch time, so there's a quiet space for children who don't want to be…..out in the main school" (SENCO 2).*

4.3.4 Future priorities

The mind map below shows the future priorities the three SENCO's discussed in their interviews. These are summarised below.

Figure 15: Future priorities mind map

The SENCOs in all three schools identified some of the schools' priorities and next steps in further supporting the emotional well-being of students in their schools. Collectively these included:

- Promoting early identification and intervention
- Developing staff (emotional) well-being
- More preventative work
- Further promoting emotional well-being
- Improving the universal level support for students' emotional well-being
- Developing staff knowledge about what support and resources are available and how they can support students' emotional well-being
- Being more explicit about how they promote emotional well-being in school to develop students' awareness of what it means
- Raising staff awareness of their responsibilities in promoting and supporting student emotional well-being

4.4 Analysis of school policies

This section presents the findings from the analysis of school policies from all three schools combined. Again, in line with the findings from the SENCO interviews, this data was supplementary and therefore will not be focused on in as much detail as the YP's focus groups. The main themes from the policies analysed across the three schools fell into the following three categories: legislation and guidance; student views; behaviour management vs pastoral support systems.

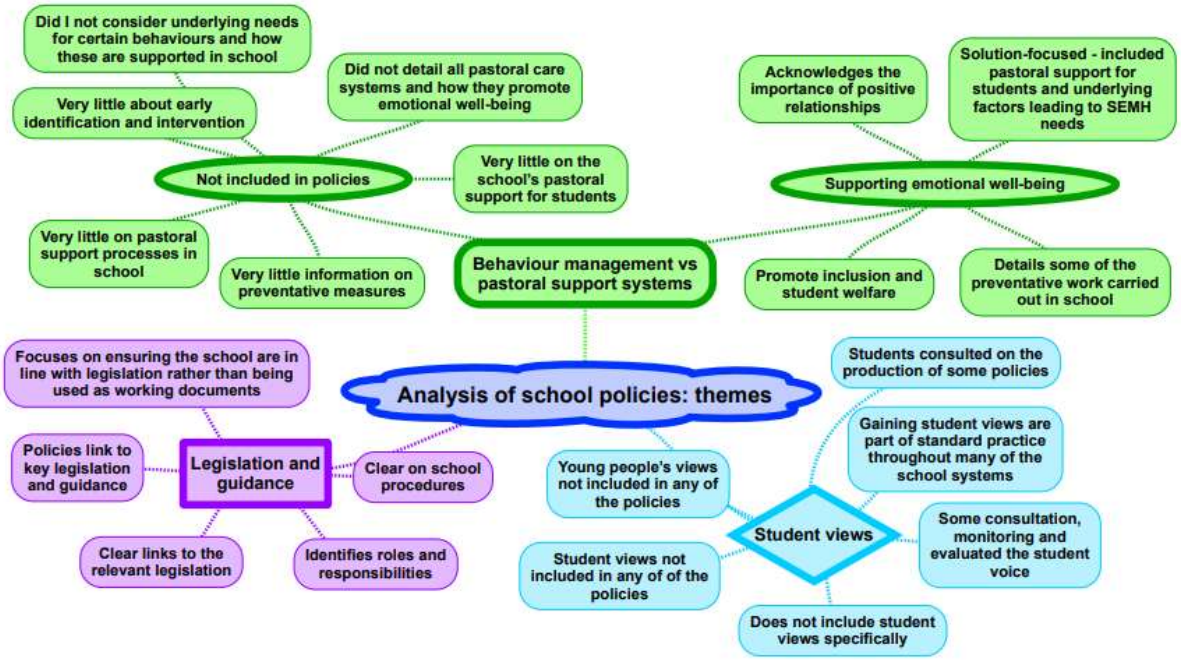


Figure 16: Analysis of school policies: themes mind map

Figure 16 above shows the themes found across the policies from the three participating schools. These are summarised under the headings below. The analysis tables can be found in Appendix 19.

4.4.1 Legislation and guidance

The policies in all three schools linked closely to relevant legislation and guidance for schools. They ensured that the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community were clearly identified as well as the school's procedures and systems on managing certain aspects of school life e.g. how they manage behaviour. The fact that many of the policies

had not been updated for 2 or more years, suggested that they had been written primarily for the purpose of keeping in line with legislation rather than being used as a working document.

4.4.2 Student views

This was a particular focus of my analysis due to the inclusive nature of the study. I noticed that many of the policies claimed to have consulted with the student council or other student forums in the production, monitoring or evaluation of the policies. School 3 actually referred to gaining the individual views of students as part of their procedures in school around systems such as exclusions. Out of the 21 policies analysed, none of these included student views directly and none appeared to involve them in the production at a more inclusive level.

4.4.3 Behaviour management vs pastoral support systems

This category arose as a result of the division between the procedures around behaviour management and the pastoral support systems in the schools which partly aim to promote and support students' emotional well-being. I have separated this theme into not included in policies and supporting emotional well-being as it became clear that the policies, particularly in schools 1 and 2, were addressing these issues as two rather than recognising the link between them. The discussion chapter will explore this notion further.

4.4.3.1 Not included in policies

Although the procedures around how schools manage behaviour were clearly documented throughout all three schools, there was very little information regarding the school's pastoral support processes, how they go about early identification and intervention or what preventative work they do to promote emotional well-being in school. The important role of pastoral staff was not included in the policies and moreover, none of the three schools had a specific policy around pastoral care but did acknowledge student welfare and support as a priority.

Schools 1 and 2 failed to highlight the possible underlying needs of those displaying behavioural needs, such as bullying. The policies were very sanction based and in line with a behaviourist approach.

4.4.3.2 Supporting emotional well-being

School 1 highlighted the importance of positive relationships throughout several of their policies. There was a focus on student welfare, promoting belonging and ensuring the school was inclusive of all. Similarly, school 2 identified student welfare as a priority, they also detailed the preventative work they carry out as part of their anti-bullying policy.

The policies in school 3 appeared to be more solution-focused than the other policies analysed. They claimed to involve YP more in the production of policies and listen to the YP as part of their day to day practices. They also acknowledged that those displaying challenging behaviours usually have an underlying SEMH need which needs addressing. Therefore, in their anti-bullying policy for example, they consider both the bully and the recipient of bullying and ensure both parties receive counselling.

4.5 Concluding comments

This chapter has presented the findings of the study from the focus groups, interviews with SENCOs and the analysis of school policies. The following chapter looks at the theoretical categories in more detail and links these to relevant theories and the research literature. It will also consider the strengths and limitations of the study and implications for practice.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction and chapter overview

This chapter explores the findings further in relation to the literature and relevant theories and draws out the new knowledge found. It will also compare the supplementary data with the focus group findings in order to further identify some next steps for schools.

This chapter is broken down into the following sections:

- Understanding YP's help-seeking behaviours from an adult in school to support their emotional well-being: the internal decision-making process
- Comparing the supplementary data to the views of the YP: drawing out the gaps
- Next steps for schools and EPs
- Strengths and limitations of the study

5.2 Understanding YP's help-seeking behaviours from an adult in school to support their emotional well-being: the internal decision-making process

The idea of YP going through an internal decision-making process when considering whether to seek help from an adult in school for support with their emotional well-being emerged throughout the analysis. This concept aims to highlight the complexity of adolescent help-seeking behaviours and the conflicts they face when seeking help. *Figure 17* below illustrates the wide-ranging aspects YP in this study consider prior to making a decision as to whether to seek help or not; they are organised under the overarching theoretical category headings. This process often varied per person and was dependent upon their problem experienced however, in order to overcome some of the barriers to adolescent help-seeking in school, and facilitate it, it is important that professionals working with YP in schools have an understanding of this.

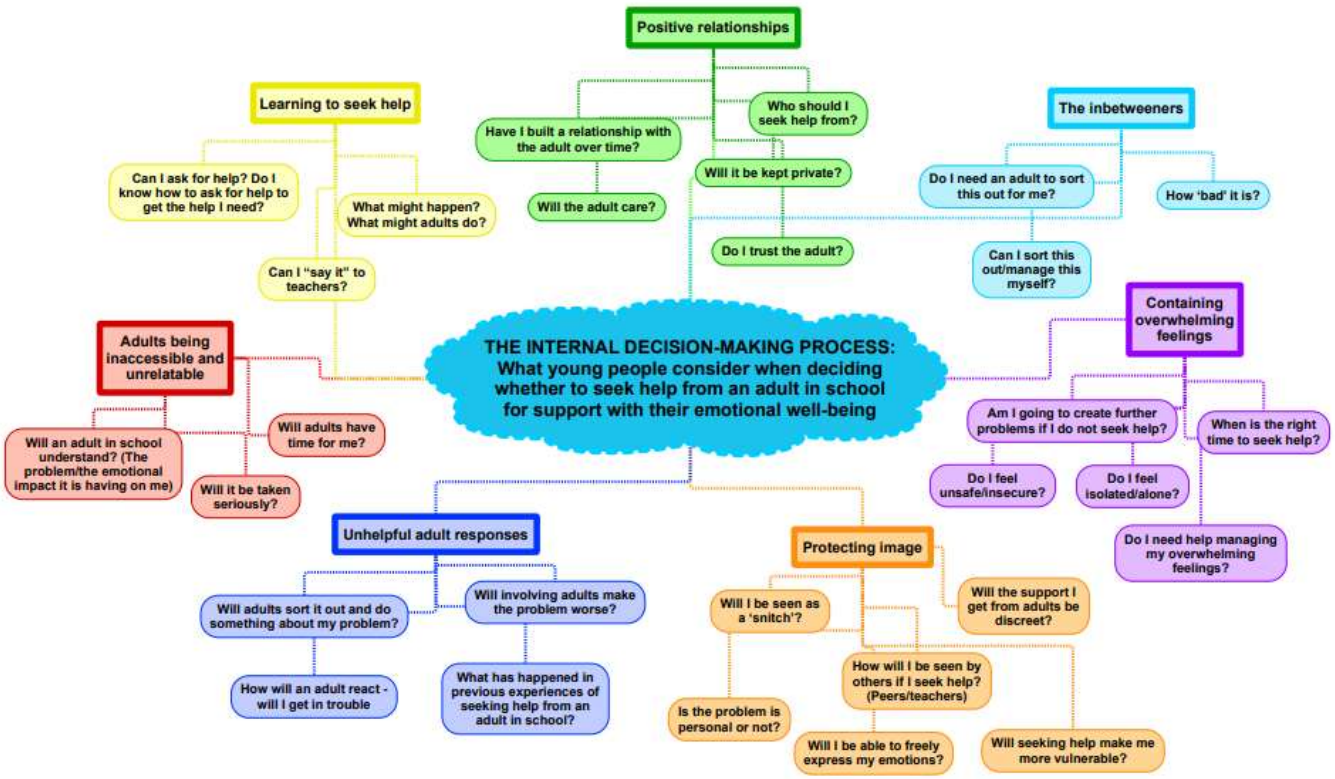


Figure 17: The internal decision-making process

The following section explains how the internal decision-making process maps onto neurodevelopmental and child development theories. Each of the areas on *Figure 17* above are then discussed in more detail.

5.2.1 The theory behind the internal decision-making process

Previous literature has shown us that adolescents go through considerable brain restructuring (Siegal, 2014). This leads to an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex which impacts on their higher order thinking skills, or executive functioning, which includes making rational and informed decisions (Casey, Jones and Hare, 2008). Consequently, adolescents are more likely to make their decisions based upon social factors and their emotions (Blakemore and Robbins, 2012).

The model above (*Figure 17*) extends the current evidence-base by illustrating the wide range of considerations that impact on YP's decision around whether to seek help in school for their emotional well-being and suggests that they consider far more than previously thought. These findings also emerged using an inclusive research approach which is novel in this research area and therefore adds additional weight to this argument. This process highlights both what helps encourage YP to seek help from adults in school for their emotional well-being as well as the barriers which prevent them.

5.2.2 What do YP perceive to help and hinder them when seeking help from an adult in school for their emotional well-being?

5.2.2.1 Positive relationships

Seligman (2011) highlighted the importance of relationships for psychological well-being and happiness. The YP in this study highlighted relationships as being crucial to facilitating help-seeking for their emotional well-being from adults in school; this has also been recognised in previous research by Rickwood and colleagues (2005).

The findings show that in terms of YP's relationships with adults in school, YP consider carefully who to seek help from and this is influenced by whom they have developed trusting relationships with. This mirrors findings from Rickwood and colleagues (2007). YP have also spoke of 'trustworthiness' as an important characteristic of helpers in a range of previous research (Freake et/ al, 2007; Kurtz et al, 2000; Adelman et al, 1993; Hodgson et al, 1986; Erikson, 1950; Gorard and Huat See, 2011). The YP needed to know that the adults they seek help from care about them and will respect the privacy of their problem. Trust appeared to be linked to the quality of a relationship and was based on YP's previous experiences of seeking help. This study showed that trustworthiness promoted adolescent help-seeking whereas broken trust was a key reason for many YP choosing not to seek help.

Although trust is paramount to YP being able to talk to adults in school about their emotional well-being, research has found that finding a trusted adult to talk to can often be a challenge for YP, a challenge that adults do not understand or fully appreciate (Armstrong

et al, 2000). The YP in this study talked about the importance of mutual trust in their relationships with adults in school which were based on a relationship which had developed over time and where they had had positive previous experiences with them. These findings extend the previous literature, as the concept of mutuality further highlights the intricacy of these trusting relationships and suggests that they need to be more reciprocal in nature.

The importance of positive relationships developing over-time was also a key finding in research by Kurtz and colleagues (2000) when looking at the help-seeking behaviours of homeless youths. When relationships develop over-time they can lead to attuned and trusting bonds (Geddes, 2006) whereby the adult can ensure the YP feels safe and contained, both physically and emotionally (Armstrong et al, 2000). This was deemed as important to the YP in this study and will be discussed further in 5.2.2.3. Furthermore, despite schools having pastoral staff in place to support YP, the YP in this study identified that sometimes their most important relationship was with a teacher. However, previous research has shown that the organisation of secondary schools can have a negative impact on student-teacher relationships developing (Dornbusch and Glasgow, 1996).

5.2.2.2 The inbetweeners

Throughout the study a common theme was around the conflict YP face between being independent and having agency, and being dependent on adults. Erikson's psychosocial stage theory of development (1950; 1963; 1968) is helpful when considering the findings of this study as Erikson believed that the main tasks for YP, aged between approximately 12-18 years of age, are to develop their self-concept and form their identity. He talks about adolescence as a transition from childhood to adulthood and therefore from dependency to independency. His theory therefore helps to explain why the YP in this study are facing this conflict as to whether to seek help or not as they are striving to become more independent; a finding also consistent with Gulliver et al (2010).

In addition to Erikson's stage theory of development (1950; 1963; 1968) as an explanation for this conflict, neuroscience can also help us to understand this difficulty. It is well understood that brain plasticity allows for the brain to adapt and change throughout our

lives according to our experiences (Spear, 2012). Spear (2012, p. 10) talks about brain maturity as a "balance between plasticity and stability". In childhood, our brains are more malleable as we are exposed to developmental experiences; as our brains mature, they show more stability of neural networks. From a neurodevelopmental perspective, adolescence is understood as the transition from childhood to adulthood where these imbalances in the brain lead to difficulties in decision-making (Kanwal, Jung and Zhang, 2015).

This conflict YP are facing at this stage in their lives reflects adolescence as a continuum between not feeling like a child anymore but also not feeling like an adult just yet. They are 'in-between' being dependent and independent**.** This was suggested in the data as some YP made conflicting comments about choosing to resolve difficulties themselves and seeking help. Others suggested that help was required for some problems but not others and some appeared more reliant on adults than others. Those less reliant on adults were using friends as a help source or using alternative coping mechanisms which could suggest that they were further along the dependence-independence continuum than some of their peers.

Many of the YP talked about solving problems independently which mirrors findings that independent problem-solving is often the preferred coping strategy for YP as found by Gibson et al (1992). On the opposite end of this continuum, they suggested that adults had more power to resolve problems they could not, such as bullying. At other times, the YP appeared to constantly shift on the dependence-independence continuum depending on a range of factors including the type of problem.

Whether to seek help for a problem perceived as 'bad' was a difficult decision to make for the YP in this study. I wondered whether the YP might be referring to a safeguarding issue or risky behaviour when they talked about 'bad' problems. The YP did not explore the concept of 'bad' problems further and the pupil researchers did not follow up on this concept. However, the YP appeared to all know what each other meant by the term 'bad' problems. If the YP were referring to the confusion over safeguarding in schools and what adults in school could keep confidential, this could be inhibiting adolescent help-seeking in schools

for issues around their emotional well-being. Further exploration of what YP perceive 'bad' problems to be could extend our understanding of the barriers to their help-seeking behaviours.

5.2.2.3 Containing overwhelming feelings

The YP recognised that strong emotions sometimes led to further problems or situations which made their problem worse, such as damaging relationships with friends or family. This finding is in line with findings from Hunter and Borg (2006) who found that YP will seek help for manging emotions, elicited by bullying, which might lead them to respond in an unhelpful way, such as using aggression. In the current study, the YP reported that this usually happened when they had tried to independently resolve a problem and manage on their own. They acknowledged that they do not always manage their emotions successfully. These findings extend the current literature as it suggests that YP use a trial and error approach to gradually move from one end of the dependence-independence continuum to the other.

Hunter and Borg (2006) also found that YP will seek help from adults depending on the type and intensity of their emotion. In the current study, it appeared to be the emotion that the YP were unable to manage independently and sought help for, rather than the problem they were facing. The YP suggested that the problem often seems easier to resolve once the immediate overwhelming emotion is managed or contained with the support of adults. Again, this furthers our understanding of why YP may be more likely to seek help when experiencing an overwhelming emotion.

This difficulty with being unable to manage emotions can be explained by the changes in the adolescent brain. Dumontheil (2016) explains why YP people often feel overwhelmed with emotion and do not know how to cope with it. At these uncertain times, the importance of feeling safe is essential. The YP spoke of feeling 'safe' when they seek help from trusted adults in school and are able to express their emotions freely. This finding would be in line with findings that YP consider adults as having a role in making them feel both physically and emotional safe as a means to promoting a positive mental health (Armstrong and

colleagues, 2000). The YP suggest that having a safe place to go and being able to talk to adults who are non-judgemental creates these feelings of safety for YP.

Furthermore, the YP suggested that being ready to learn involves being in an emotionally stable place to be able to concentrate on the academic demands placed on them. This is similar to findings by Qi (2012) who suggests that YP's emotional needs should be met to promote learning. The YP talked about having 'meltdowns' and not being able to do anything other than express the emotion. This view would be in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1971) in terms of not being able to reach the higher levels of the hierarchy until basic needs at the lower end, which includes emotional needs, are satisfied. The YP suggested that adults do not always understand that, for them, these needs take priority over learning. Bannerjee (2010) and Durlak and colleagues (2011) suggest that by showing staff the evidence which indicates the potential positive impact on academic achievement when social emotional education is properly implemented and delivered may help teachers to understand the importance of this aspect of their role and consequently may heighten their awareness and bolster early identification.

In contrast to seeking help for overwhelming emotions, extreme levels of feeling helpless, due to ongoing bullying, led one YP to keep these feelings to himself. This supports Hunter and Borg's (2006) findings that those YP who do not seek help about bullying in school either do not care or feel helpless. This also reflects research which suggests that YP's intention to seek help decreases as their distress increases (Ciarrochi et al, 2002; Glasheen et al, 2016). It is worth noting that only one of the YP in the study commented on choosing not to seek help due to the intensity of his negative emotion. This highlights individual differences or could be related to the type of problem, such as bullying, and warrants future research.

The idea of emotional containment is closely linked with a secure attachment (Bowlby, 1953); as is feeling safe and secure. In this study the YP appear to be seeking help from adults with whom they have attuned relationships with, in order to help them feel safe and help them to contain and manage their overwhelming emotions. The YP wanted adults to be

able to gauge the right time to talk to them and identify how they might be feeling which links closely to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1953) and attuned relationships. Geddes (2006) talks about empathic attunement whereby secure attachment relationships lead to the primary caregiver being able to understand how the infant feels and can help the infant co-regulate. Therefore, this is also associated with the need for positive relationships as it relies on adults being attuned to the emotions of YP.

5.2.2.4 Protecting image

The YP in this study talked about the importance of protecting their reputation and sustaining their relationships with their peers in relation to help-seeking. This is the opposite to Lally et al's (2013) findings with university students who found that personal, rather than public, stigma is the biggest barrier to mental health help-seeking. This is likely to be due to the age of the YP in this study. The YP also reported feeling embarrassed by adults and being emotionally exposed. This appeared to influence YP's attitudes towards seeking support for their emotional well-being. Their concerns were particularly linked to looking vulnerable and preserving their image to their peers. These findings were also corroborated in Kendal et al's (2014) qualitative study. In this study, interviews were carried out with staff and students within three UK high schools to explore their help-seeking behaviours in response to the introduction of a pastoral project. Findings suggested that YP saw help-seeking as a sign of weakness. Similarly, Gulliver and colleagues (2010) found embarrassment to be a fear which prevented YP from seeking help from adults. In this study one YP talked of feeling judged and being seen by her peers as 'easy prey' when feeling exposed.

These findings would be in line with Erikson's (1968) view of adolescence being a vulnerable stage of development; where YP have lowered self-esteem and social anxieties as they attempt to identify their role within society. This would explain YP's feelings of fear and reluctance around seeking help as adolescents have been found to be highly sensitive to peer rejection and stigma around emotional difficulties (Kendal et al, 2014). Furthermore, my findings are also in line with MacLean and colleagues (2013) who found that YP were concerned about the impact of mental health stigma from their peers, parents and their

teachers. The YP appeared to have concerns about their reputation to adults in school as well as their peers.

In response to these concerns, the YP talked about wanting adults to provide discreet support. They acknowledged that they needed adult guidance in some instances but wanted this to be away from their peers. In addition to this, they wanted to be able to freely express their emotions in a safe place which did not lead to them damaging their reputation or relationships and did not lead to them getting into trouble, for example, by swearing and shouting. These methods of protecting the YP's image and self-concept add to the current evidence base and should help to facilitate help-seeking in school for their emotional well-being.

Although there were no significant gender differences identified within the current study, some of the boys referred to not wanting to be seen as a 'snitch' by their peers, if they sought help from an adult in school for a social or emotional problem, through fear of damaging their relationships. This is in line with Erikson's (1968) view that adolescence is a time where social anxieties are heightened. It could also further support the findings that boys are less likely than girls to seek help for emotional difficulties (Rickwood et al, 2005; Tishby et al, 2001) and one of the reasons for this is thought to be due to gender stereotypes in society whereby males feel as though they are expected to be strong and self-reliant (Addis and Mahalik, 2003) and seeking help is a weakness (Chan and Quinn, 2012).

As an example of YP attempting to protect their image, some of the YP in focus group 2 appeared to base what they said, on what others within the group would think of them. For example, by trying to make others in the group laugh. A key reflection I took from this observation was that this highlighted their point that protecting their image to their peers to avoid them feeling vulnerable at this particular stage of development, is of high importance to YP.

5.2.2.5 Unhelpful adult responses

The YP considered carefully whether to seek help based on their own and others previous experiences. Primarily the concerns which fell into this category were related to adults either doing nothing to help YP, or their involvement making the situation worse. The YP also suggested that adults can confuse them by giving them too many possible options when trying to help.

One of the main discussions when talking about adults not doing anything was around the issue of bullying in school. Particularly in one school, but evident across the three, there was a consensus that the school did nothing about bullying or, if they did, they had very little impact. Some of the YP had personal experiences of reporting bullying which had continued, whereas others reported this as a more generalised and socially constructed opinion. These comments could mean that there is an underlying bullying problem within the participating secondary schools or could be due to how adults respond to reports of bullying.

Previous research has suggested that YP want adults to listen and respond to their views in order to feel valued (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). Furthermore, YP have reported to want helpers to check in on them (Kurtz et al, 2000) and show that they genuinely care about them (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). These findings suggest that when YP receive no feedback on what has happened as a result of reporting bullying and there has been no aftercare from their chosen helper, YP appear to feel as though their problem was not taken seriously and this often leads to extreme feelings of helplessness or hopelessness.

5.2.2.6 Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable

Adults in school being too busy was reported by the YP in this study to inhibit their help-seeking behaviours. This finding supports Anderson and Graham (2016) and Helms' (2003) whereby YP believe that adults in school are too busy to be able to help and support them. This also suggests that accessibility to adults in school is important to the YP. This has also been found to be an important helper quality in other research (Buston, 2002).

Lindsey and Kalafat (1998) have highlighted adults being 'psychologically inaccessible' as a barrier to help-seeking in school. Many of these attributes of being 'psychologically inaccessible' were voiced by the YP in the current study with YP either saying that adults are too busy or expect them to wait. In addition to the existing literature, the YP in this study stress that when adults are unavailable this can lead them to feeling unsupported and pushed away, which in turn impacts negatively on their emotional well-being.

The YP also talked about adults not seeing the significance of their problems and not acknowledging them as important. This is not the message that we need to be sending to YP and instead should be encouraging help-seeking for any problems which are causing them distress (Rickwood et al, 2005). Previous findings by Armstrong and colleagues (2000) suggest that YP, and adults, trivialise adolescent problems due to a societal assumption that adult's problems are more 'serious'. This point was acknowledged in the current study as one of the YP talked about not seeking help for small issues as adults would not deem this as necessary. This comment appeared to have come from a previous experience of seeking help and was corroborated by others in the focus group.

Previous findings by Corry and Leavey's (2017) found that YP wanted GPs to be aware of and understand the types of problems YP are facing and coping with. This is line with what the YP in this study were seeking in a helper and suggests that in order for adults to relate to YP when they seek help, adults need a better understanding of YP's problems and emotional needs. Furthermore, the YP often referred to requiring some time out and someone to listen to them when feeling emotionally distressed. Without access to this lower level, universal support this is likely to inhibit the early identification of mental health needs in YP. Although schools have access to information about how they can promote the emotional well-being of their students in school (Public Health England, 2015) which includes the use of evidence-based interventions (Kidger et al, 2009), this information does not specify how best to support YP on a day to day basis. This is where gaining the views of CYP around how they like to be supported can be of help; this is also advocated by Kidger and colleagues (2009).

5.2.2.7 Learning to seek help

The YP in this study reported to be scared about what adults in school might say or do when seeking help for their emotional well-being, although they did not specify what they were scared of. Similar to the idea of 'bad' problems, the pupil researchers did not follow up on the idea of being scared to seek help which perhaps suggests that this is a common response and they all have an understanding of what this means to them. The YP also had a clear understanding of who they can gain support from and where to go within school when seeking it. However, the main barrier was actually being able to do this.

Rickwood and colleagues (2005) identified help-seeking as a life skill which, in order to be helpful in managing emotional distress throughout life, needs to be learnt and practiced throughout all stages of development. Helpfully, King, Strunk and Sorter (2010) believe that in addition to educating YP on how to access information about mental health and how to prevent it, schools should also teach YP how to seek help. However, they do not specify what aspects of seeking help YP need to be taught.

The YP in this study identified that they needed to learn the skills to seek or ask for help, particularly when it was regarding their emotional needs. They identified not being able to talk to adults in school about their emotional distress, partly due to not knowing how to 'say it', in order to receive the support and guidance they need. It is perhaps assumed by adults that these skills develop adequately alongside YP's emotional literacy and their ability to articulate their emotions.

However, it is likely that YP find this particularly hard due to the restructuring taking place within the adolescent brain (Spear, 2012). These changes, as a result of synaptic pruning, myelination and delayed development of their pre-frontal cortex (Casey et al, 2008), lead to adolescents having difficulties with executive functions, which help us plan, reason and reflect; and their overactive limbic system which causes them to react with rapid and intense emotions (Siegel, 2014). The likelihood that adolescents will decide that the best way to manage a difficulty, during times of emotional distress, is to seek help from an adult in school is therefore minimised. These high intensity emotions coupled with limited higher

order functioning skills will also impact on adolescents' ability to articulate and talk about their concerns.

Moreover, Rickwood and colleagues (2005) suggest that help-seeking requires a shift from personal to interpersonal domains. Therefore, both relationships and certain interpersonal skills are required in order to be able to do this successfully. These findings, alongside the neurodevelopmental theory, suggest YP need considerable support to develop these skills.

Another crucial reason to teach adolescent help-seeking skills is to aid the development of adaptive, rather than nonadaptive help-seeking skills. Newman (2008) suggests that adaptive help-seeking encompasses: identifying when help is required, the ability to select an appropriate helper and communicate needs, emotional regulation and the ability to consider a flexible approach to solving the problem. In contrast, nonadaptive help-seeking skills comprises of seeking help even when it is not required and therefore becoming over dependent, and avoiding seeking help (Newman, 2008). Choosing not to seek help was a common strategy used by the YP in all three focus groups in this study. Although by doing this the YP feel that they are becoming more independent, this has the potential to result in nonadaptive help-seeking skills which does not promote learning these skills for any future difficulties they may face.

Moreover, emotional competence has been associated with higher intentions to seek help for more serious mental health difficulties amongst older adolescents (Ciarrochi and Deane, 2001) and research indicates that emotion coaching can aid the development of social and emotional competence (Rose et al, 2015). The YP in the study did suggest that they were often guided through problems in a way that helped them to learn how to manage a problem in future. This is consistent with the emotion coaching approach (Gottman and DeClaire, 1998). Similarly, emotional scaffolding has been defined as "temporary but reliable teacher-initiated interactions that support students' positive emotional experiences to achieve a variety of classroom goals" (Meyer and Turner, 2006, p. 236). Scaffolding is linked to the idea of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development whereby an individual has support from a more able other is gradually decreased until the individual is able to

complete the task independently. This would also support YP to move successfully along the dependence-independence continuum.

As a consequence of promoting and supporting help-seeking in schools, this can contribute to developing YP's resilience (Aldridge et al, 2015). Seligman (2011) stresses the importance of resilience, the ability to manage negative emotions and experience positive emotions, for overall psychological well-being. An emotion coaching approach is likely to empower YP and therefore provide the perfect conditions for YP to develop resilience (Rose et al, 2015). As resilience is a key aspect of emotional well-being (Shucksmith et al, 2007), schools should be developing the resilience of students in schools (DfE, 2016) through social and emotional education (Mustard, 2008).

5.3 Comparing the supplementary data to the views of the young people: drawing out the gaps

The model below highlights the key findings from the three sources of data together to draw out the similarities and differences between these differing perspectives. This section compares the supplementary data gathered, from the school SENCOs and relevant policies, with the views of the YP. It also compares the SENCO's views with the information documented in the school policies. These comparisons aim to draw out the gaps, highlight the helpfulness of involving YP in research and further identify the next steps for schools and EPs which will be presented in section 5.4.

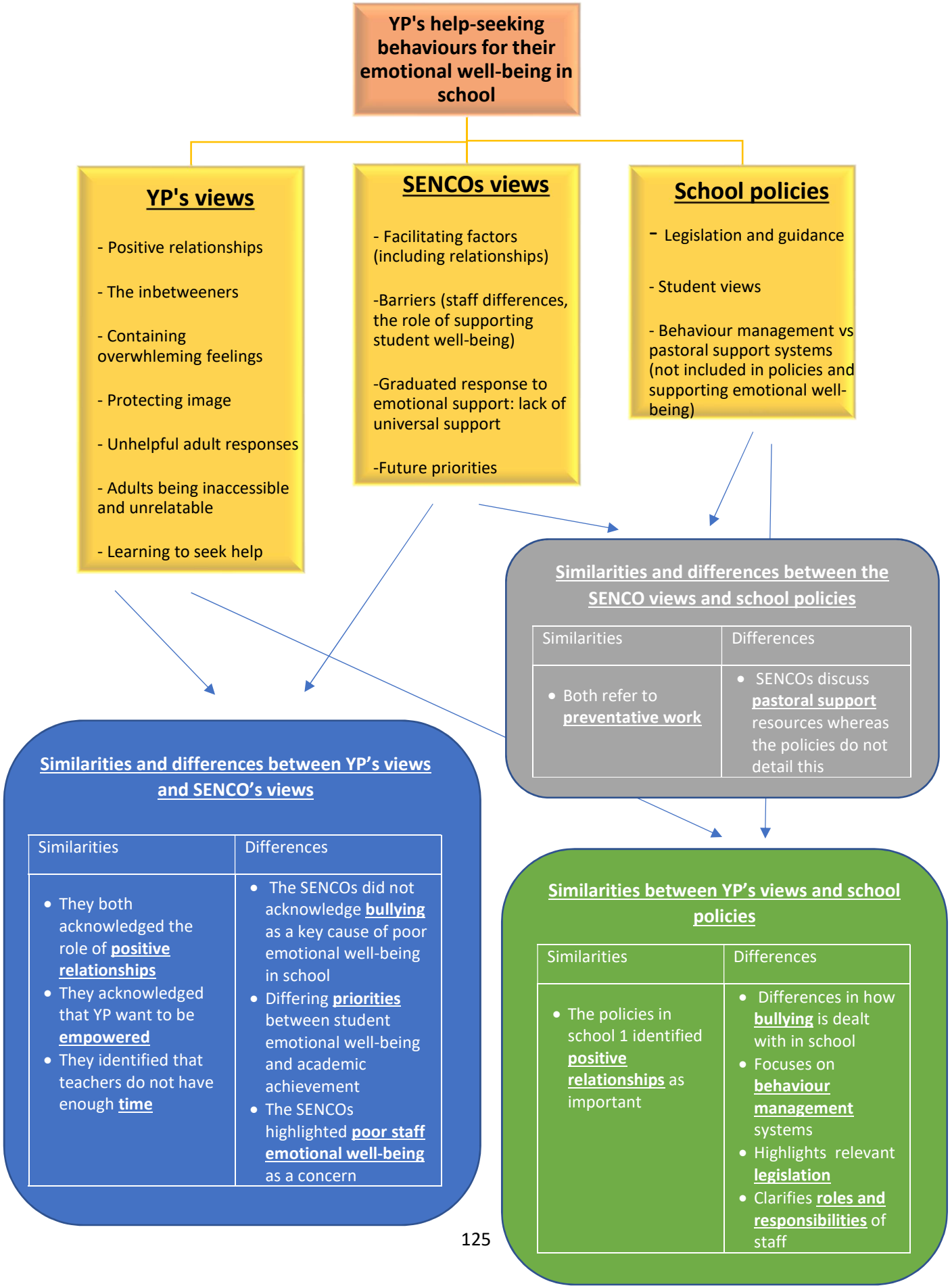

YP's help-seeking behaviours for their emotional well-being in school
YP's views
- Positive relationships
- The inbetweeners
- Containing overwhleming feelings
- Protecting image
- Unhelpful adult responses
- Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable
- Learning to seek help
SENCOs views
- Facilitating factors (including relationships)
-Barriers (staff differences, the role of supporting student well-being)
-Graduated response to emotional support: lack of universal support
-Future priorities
School policies
- Legislation and guidance
- Student views
- Behaviour management vs pastoral support systems (not included in policies and supporting emotional well-being)
Similarities and differences between the SENCO views and school policies
Similarities
• Both refer to preventative work
Differences
• SENCOs discuss pastoral support resources whereas the policies do not detail this
Similarities and differences between YP's views and SENCO's views
Similarities
• They both acknowledged the role of positive relationships
• They acknowledged that YP want to be empowered
• They identified that teachers do not have enough time
Differences
• The SENCOs did not acknowledge bullying as a key cause of poor emotional well-being in school
• Differing priorities between student emotional well-being and academic achievement
• The SENCOs highlighted poor staff emotional well-being as a concern
Similarities between YP's views and school policies
Similarities
• The policies in school 1 identified positive relationships as important
Differences
• Differences in how bullying is dealt with in school
• Focuses on behaviour management systems
• Highlights relevant legislation
• Clarifies roles and responsibilities of staff

Figure 18: Model comparing the three *sources of data*

The key comparisons are discussed below under the following headings:

- Positive relationships
- Bullying
- Student emotional well-being vs academic achievement
- The confidence of staff
- Overlapping school systems

5.3.1 Positive relationships

Both the YP and the SENCOs acknowledged the importance of positive relationships with adults in school to support their emotional well-being. The SENCOs highlighted that YP usually have a preferred adult in school to talk to and were aware that adults need to take the time to get to know students. The SENCO in school 2 saw students' friendships as key sources of emotional support for students, a view supported by older research by Kalafat (1997) and Kalafat and Elias (1995). Interestingly, although the YP talked about their friends as a source of support, due to them being better able to relate to their problems, they also talked about their friends as being unhelpful in helping them to manage their emotions. The importance of repairing and rebuilding student-teacher relationships when they broke down was also acknowledged by SENCO 1. This was about teaching YP how to sustain positive relationships rather than using sanctions to punish inappropriate behaviour.

This comparison shows us that although the SENCOs understand that positive relationships between the students and adults in school are important to their emotional well-being, they did not comment very extensively on the intricacy of these relationships or what helps and hinders their development. The SENCOs did acknowledge that teachers have very little time available to support the emotional needs of YP but all stressed that the pastoral staff appointed in each school had considerably more time to be able to take on this role. Interestingly, despite the schools all having designated pastoral staff, the adults YP preferred to seek help from was more based on 'getting on with them' and feeling that the adults cared about them rather than those who had more time. Again, this highlights the

complexity of the relationships between YP and adults in school and suggests that the SENCOs do not fully understand this.

In school 2, the SENCO suggested that within these relationships a coaching model is often used by the adults in school as a way of supporting and empowering YP to be able to resolve their own problems independently in the future. This view reflected the views of the YP in the study however, the SENCOs more commonly spoke of YP wanting adults to resolve their problems for them. There were no explicit comments from the SENCOs to suggest they understood that their adolescent students are at a crucial developmental stage where they are striving to be more independent. Perhaps if adults in school had a greater awareness of this, they would work with YP to support this transition from being dependent to independent.

In response to being asked about the support in place throughout school to support YP's emotional well-being, the SENCOs all discussed having a pastoral support hierarchy. This identified who the YP people should seek help from in the first instance if they required support, such as their tutor or head of house. This is despite acknowledging that YP will go to their preferred adult whom they have a positive relationship with when they need help or support with their emotions. All of the SENCOs recognised that these relationships aid the early identification, and therefore intervention, of students' emotional well-being needs. Although a range of policies analysed in school 1 identified positive relationships, this was linked to how they manage behaviour rather than promoting and support student's emotional well-being and help-seeking behaviours. The importance of positive relationships was recognised to a far lesser degree in the policies analysed in schools 2 and 3.

5.3.2 Bullying

Bullying was only briefly mentioned by one of the school SENCOs and not mentioned at all by the SENCO in school 3 as a reason for poor emotional well-being in students. This is despite the YP discussing the impact of bullying at length in the focus group in school 3. This is of particular concern considering the research which suggests that bullying can often lead

to intense emotions, such as helplessness, and consequently reduce the likelihood of the victim seeking help (Hunter and Borg, 2006).

Furthermore, in relation to bullying which the YP said adults doing nothing about, all of the schools had anti-bullying policies which clearly state their procedures for reported incidences of bullying. These were very cleared and were reported to be followed strictly. This could suggest that these policies are not adhered to and used as working documents. Alternatively, the YP could perceive adults to not doing anything about bullying as a result of their involvement not having any impact or the YP not receiving any aftercare and feedback, as discussed in section 5.2.2.5.

Of additional concern, student's views, from any form of consultation during the production of the school policies, were not included. The anti-bullying policy in the school where the YP reported bullying as a particular problem was produced by the learning trust the school was part of, rather than by anyone within school. This goes against guidance from Public Health England (2015) who suggest that CYP, along with others in the school community, should be involved in the production of policies to support YP's mental health and emotional well-being in school. Given that the YP in this study discussed bullying as a considerable cause of their poor emotional well-being, it would logical to involve the YP in the production of this policy. Furthermore, recent findings from Lindstrom Johnson, Waasdorp, Gaias and Bradshaw (2018) show that anti-bullying policies cannot simply be in existence, but staff should have regular training on how to apply the strategies defined within the policies to tackle bullying. This further supports my argument that these policies should be working documents.

5.3.3 Student emotional well-being vs academic achievement

Although break and lunch times were identified by the school SENCOs as times students could seek emotional support, the YP often felt that issues needed to be discussed when they felt it to be appropriate, which might be during a lesson. The SENCO in school 1 was aware of the difficulty teachers have in trying to balance supporting student's emotional well-being with ensuring they are attending lessons and making academic progress. This was

due to the pressures upon them. Yet previous research has told us that the academic pressures placed upon YP can be the cause of their negative emotional well-being (West and Sweeting, 2003). Moreover, the external pressures on teachers can prevent positive student-teacher relationships developing (Graham, Powell and Truscott, 2016). Both previous and the current study's findings suggest that schools are struggling to strike the right balance between supporting YP's emotional well-being and achieving good academic results; this is despite the research showing the link between the two (Hecht, Inderbitzen and Bukowski, 1998; Laukkanen, Shemeikka, Notkola, Koivumaa-Honkanen and Nissinen, 2002; West and Sweeting, 2003).

Similarly, the SENCOs in all three of the schools acknowledged the need for staff well-being to be of higher priority and an area of development within the school in order to further enhance whole school emotional well-being. The YP's talked about their experiences of adults in school being grumpy, strict and being inaccessible. This could reflect the high stress levels amongst staff and lack of support for staff emotional well-being which was raised as a particular concern by the SENCO in school 1. This is in line with the findings of Kidger and colleagues (2009) who found that poor emotional well-being, impacted on teachers' capacity to support the emotional well-being of their students.

5.3.4 The confidence of staff

Interestingly, one of the SENCOs spoke of some staff either misunderstanding the complexities of YP's emotional well-being or having fears around making these issues worse. The SENCO suggested that this is why some members of staff find this aspect of their role difficult. This mirrors previous research which found that adults in school fear supporting YP with more serious mental health needs through concerns about making things worse (Kalafat and Elias, 1994; Ciffone, 1993; Poland, 1995). Despite this finding, all of the SENCOs in this study felt that most school staff understood that supporting student's mental health and emotional well-being was part of their role; a finding in line with old research by Roeser and Midgley (1997). However, they also recognised that willingness to take on this part of their role was a difficulty for some members of staff. It was thought that this was usually

due to lack of confidence as a result of limited training in the mental health of CYP. This view is also consistent with previous findings around staff confidence levels (Kidger et al, 2009).

Similarly, evidence has found (DfE, 2010) that some teachers have criticised social emotional education due to viewing it at a change in their practice, not central to their role and inflexible in fitting in with their subject areas. Equally, their reluctance could be due to their own difficulties with their emotional well-being. Many of the points above could be seen to explain some of the YP's comments around adults making their problems worse, not appearing to want to become involved and being unable to relate to the problems and emotions of adolescence. Developing staff confidence through training and drawing their attention to this aspect of their role could help to support student emotional well-being and help-seeking.

5.3.5 Overlapping school systems

The SENCO in school 1 talked about pastoral and safeguarding systems overlapping. Although this was not specifically mentioned by the YP, it could explain some of their fear around talking to adults about their emotional well-being. Previous findings suggest that YP have concerns about confidentiality issues when they confide in an adult in school (Armstrong et al, 2000; Helms, 2003; Lindsey and Kalafat, 1998); they felt that it was unclear what would be kept confidential and what information they would need to pass on (Armstrong et al, 2000). The SENCOs did not identify that this could be a possible barrier to adolescent help-seeking.

The other school systems with significant overlaps are the school's pastoral support systems and behaviour management systems. Interestingly, many aspects of the student support mentioned by the SENCOs was not included in the school policies, such as, the important role of pastoral staff. This was despite SENCO 1 highlighting the significant amount of systems in place and resources going into providing this support to the students. In school 2, the SENCO acknowledged that the school policies did not detail the pastoral support offered throughout the school at either a universal or higher needs level; this was suggested by indicating that a pastoral care policy is required.

However, in schools 1 and 3 there was some acknowledgement of the pastoral support systems within their behaviour management policies. In school 3, they were explicit about the link between SEMH and challenging behaviour and therefore provided pastoral support appropriately to meet the needs of these YP, in line with the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015). However, SENCO 1 acknowledged that some adults prefer a behaviourist approach to others and suggested that some find it difficult to respond to challenging behaviour in a positive way. One of the YP in the focus group in this school appeared to acknowledge this by describing how some staff tell her to walk away from a situation to help her calm down, and how others reprimand her for being out of lesson when she does this. This suggests the potential conflict between the behaviour management systems and pastoral support systems. Guidance from the DfE (2018) suggests it would be unfair to follow these types of systems rigidly with some pupils who have additional needs. The flexible nature of these school systems could be confusing YP and acting as a barrier to their help-seeking; this would require further research.

The school policies analysed focused heavily on school systems and procedures and linked to legislation rather than promoting and supporting the emotional well-being of students. Furthermore, none of the policies acknowledged the importance of encouraging help-seeking behaviours. There was a focus on behaviour management systems, particularly in schools 1 and 2, and these policies did not detail how the pastoral care systems fit into these. This finding highlights that schools need to include more information about their pastoral care systems in their policies or produce a standalone policy around their pastoral care. A standalone policy is likely to be preferred by the YP.

Analysing the relevant school policies and comparing this with the views of the YP in this study has highlighted the lack of information in the policies around how they promote and support student emotional well-being. This is despite NICE guidance (2008) suggesting that schools report their policies and practices around how they do this.

5.3.6 Summary

Previous research has not compared the views of the YP with the views of school SENCOs and data from relevant school policies. Coupled with the inclusive research approach, this has attempted to illustrate what schools are missing in terms of their emotional well-being support for YP in school and what they need to be mindful of in order to promote YP to seek help. Moreover, although many of the policies analysed claimed to consult students as part of the policy production, none of the policies prioritised student participation in their development, or incorporated their voice. The YP in this study have shown how they have important views and ideas about how their emotional well-being should be supported in school and these views could be successfully incorporated into a school policy. Finally, although there were more similarities between the views of the YP and SENCOs, there were still significant discrepancies. We should also be mindful that the views of the SENCOs do not reflect the views and understanding of other adults in school.

5.4 Next steps for schools and EPs

The findings of this study, along with what has already been identified in the literature, has identified a range of factors that schools and EPs need to consider in order to encourage YP to seek help for their emotional well-being from adults in school.


What do YP say adults need to do to encourage them to seek help for their emotional well-being in school?
Recognise the role of positive relationships with adults in school
Teach them how to seek help
Understand YP's conflict between being dependent & independent
Help YP manage & contain their overwhelming feelings
Make adults accessible and relatable
Give adults the skills to resolve YP's problems
Protect their image
What do SENCOs need to do?
• Prioritise positive relationships between students and staff
• Provide training for staff to build their knowledge and confidence in supporting YP's emotional needs
• Prioritise emotional well-being over student's academic achievement
What do the policies need to include?
• Co-produce key policies with YP
• Make key policies a working document e.g. anti-bullying policies
• Develop a policy around pastoral support with a focus on promoting and supporting YP's emotional well-being

Figure 19: Model to show what will encourage YP to seek help for their emotional well-being from an adult in school

Figure 19 above clearly lists the next steps for schools and these will be discussed in more detail below.

5.4.1 Ensuring schools aid YP's internal decision-making process around whether to seek help for their emotional well-being

5.4.1.1 Recognise the role of positive relationships between YP and adults in school

As these findings have shown that schools need to prioritise and encourage positive student-teacher relationships in order to promote YP's emotional well-being and their likelihood of seeking help for it, schools need systems in place to allow for reciprocal relationships to develop amongst students and staff and to be able to accommodate a YP's need to go to their preferred adult when they need this emotional support.

EPs have a good understanding of the importance of positive relationships and the theories which explain this. They can therefore provide training to staff to ensure they understand this and can work systemically with schools to support the development of systems and practices to prioritise these relationships. Ensuring that YP have a trusted adult in school to talk to is in line with The Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Paper (DfE, 2016) states as good practice in promoting positive mental health.

As research suggests that relationships are among the problems YP often seek help for (Boldero and Fallon, 1995), ensuring schools provide positive role models for this in school could also provide a blueprint for what positive relationships look and feel like in YP's futures.

5.4.1.2 Understand YP's conflict between being dependent and independent

At a crucial developmental period when adolescents are developing their self-concept and forming their identity (Erikson, 1950; 1963; 1968), schools have a key opportunity to

influence YP's lives positively well into adulthood by supporting this transition from dependency to being independent agents. To do this, schools need to acknowledge that YP want to be empowered to resolve their difficulties and should make use of evidence-based approaches, such as emotion coaching (Gottman and DeClaire, 1998), to do this. Using scaffolding techniques to acknowledge YP's need to be more independent and gradually fading the level of support provided is more in line with what the YP in this study requested.

Alongside aiding YP to become more independent, schools should try to provide positive experiences of help-seeking, reduce the stigma around seeking help as being too dependent and teach YP that it is a positive life skill carried out by independent adults.

A further possible consideration for schools is how they promote YP to seek help for 'bad' problems. This may need further exploration but could require being more explicit to YP about what information adults would need to share for safeguarding purposes and what they can, and should, keep confidential.

5.4.1.3 Help YP manage and contain their overwhelming feelings

With research showing us that adolescent brain changes mean that their ability to cope with emotionally charged situations is less than adults and younger children (Casey, Jones and Hare, 2008); coupled with the research from this study, it is paramount that schools acknowledge this and put strategies in place to facilitate help-seeking.

Regardless of the perceived seriousness of the problem, if the emotion experienced causes a YP distress, then adults in school should take this seriously and act upon it. Equally, the YP reported that adults need to prioritise students' emotional well-being needs over their academic achievement and allow them to access additional support at any time. Shute (2012) saw social emotional education as connecting both psychology and teaching in schools and therefore advocates that EPs have a role in CYP's well-being in school as well as providing psychological services around their learning (Shute, 2012). To support schools in understanding their role in containing the overwhelming feelings of their students, EPs have

key psychological knowledge, such as, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1971), and can provide training around adolescence, neurodevelopment and approaches such as emotion coaching.

Schools also need to provide a safe space for YP to be able to express their emotions and access to non-judgemental adults to help them manage them.

5.4.1.4 Protect young people's image

In order to encourage help-seeking, adults need to protect YP's public image and help maintain their social networks. This was also found in a study by Kendal and colleagues in 2014. The YP in this study have specifically stated that they require discreet support from adults when they seek support for their emotional well-being and privacy to express their emotions away from their peers.

The YP suggest that adults need a general awareness that their reputations are important to them at this developmental age. EPs can support schools to protect YP's image by providing training on adolescence and the theories related to this stage of development, such as, Erikson's (1968) stage theory of psychosocial development.

5.4.1.5 Give adults the skills to resolve young people's problems

In order to better meet the emotional needs of YP, school staff need a better awareness of: YP's problems, how they can identify and support YP's emotional well-being; evidence-based interventions which support and promote the development of emotional well-being; what impacts emotional well-being, both positively and negatively; how emotional well-being impacts academic achievement; and the qualities YP like in a helper which promote help-seeking for their emotional well-being. This therefore highlights a significant training need for staff.

EPs are well placed to provide school staff with training and supervision in order to improve their knowledge and practice and support their own emotional well-being. Moreover, EPs can promote inclusion and a shift in mental health discourse within schools via reframing the views of school staff and helping them to understand the emotional needs of their

students from a social disability model rather than a medical disability model. With EPs already working in line with the social model of disability, as opposed to understanding CYP's needs as 'within child', they are well placed to promote this shift in discourse.

Furthermore, this study highlighted a need for schools to consider how adults respond to bullying and whether this is in line with their school policies as well as whether they give YP appropriate feedback and aftercare when bullying occurs. The findings of this study also identify a need to co-produce policies with YP, for example, the school's anti-bullying policy. EPs can help with this as they have experience of collaborating with schools and YP. Gaining the views of YP through inclusive approaches can also inform staff development.

5.4.1.6 Make adults accessible and relatable

The level of emotional support the YP talked about in this study referred to what was regarded by the school SENCOs as universal support. Universal support and provision is provided to all pupils throughout the school regardless of their identified needs. Schools need to ensure that: staff are available and psychologically assessible to YP; YP feel as though their problems matter to adults in school, which suggests adult need to be better able to relate to YP's problems; and staff provide YP with 'timeout' when they need it.

In order to achieve this, schools require universal support systems in place as part of their graduated response to supporting YP's emotional well-being needs. EPs are well placed to support the development of these systems with schools (Stanbridge and Campbell, 2016) and are also mentioned in a Government green paper (DfE, 2018) as professionals who can work alongside schools to support YP with complex mental health needs. This is due to their understanding of how the graduated approach can be applied to ensure the correct individualised provision and support is in place.

School staff also require training around how to implement these support systems. Training may also include information about what it means to be psychologically accessible to YP. EPs can play a role in supporting YP to develop and lead this training themselves.

5.4.1.7 Teach young people how to seek help

In order to encourage YP to seek help for their emotional well-being in school, schools first need to help YP overcome their fears and stigma around seeking help. Many of the next steps described in the sections above will help with this however, YP need some explicit teaching around this. Furthermore, schools should be trying to prevent YP developing maladaptive coping strategies for dealing with difficulties; as these were found to be common in suicidal teens (Gould et al, 2004).

Gottman and DeClaire's (1998) emotion coaching approach highlights the role of the adult in showing empathy and validating the CYP's emotions. It acts as a way of helping CYP recognise and name emotions by modelling the language that can be used to describe feelings to others, which will no doubt aid help-seeking in their future. Schools should also support YP to scaffold their own emotional competence to promote their independence in understanding and managing emotional difficulties in the future (Järvelä, 2011), as well as communicating these feelings (Rickwood et al, 2005). This skill of recognising and communicating their emotional needs is required to be learnt and practiced in order for help-seeking to be successful (Rickwood et al, 2005).

In order to do this, EPs can deliver training to schools and collaborate with YP to develop a 'learning to seek help' curriculum. EPs are thought to be well placed to promote participation, due to our skills and experience of gaining the views of CYP, and encouraging schools to take these views on board (Hall, 2010). This way of working is likely to be unfamiliar for schools and could feel threatening. EPs can support by helping schools respond to the views of CYP and support them in embedding new practices.

This study has further highlighted the need for schools to develop a policy around their emotional well-being support which should be developed in collaboration with the YP it will be impacting. These policies need to detail the practices which are already established within schools, as well as providing further clarity around the graduated response to emotional well-being support. This study has shown that involving the YP in this process has empowered the YP and was therapeutic in nature.

Previous research has shown that schools tend to use EPs and interventions on a reactive rather than proactive basis (Vostanis, Humphrey, Fitzgerald, Deighton and Wolpert, 2013). Wolpert and colleagues (2015) highlight that the role of the EP here is to draw school's attention to how EPs can help them to support the mental health and emotional well-being of students; this is acknowledged as a noteworthy challenge during these interesting times (Greig, MacKay, Roffey and Williams, 2016). Therefore, the primary implications for the EP role are around EPs working systemically to support schools to become proactive and more aware of the emotional and mental health needs of their students.

The findings of this study could be used to develop a whole-school approach to emotional well-being in school which focuses on encouraging YP to seek help. This has been demonstrated as an effective way of working by Atkinson and colleagues (2019) who developed and implemented a whole school mental health strategy with the participation of YP. In response to the current findings: EPs could support YP to carry out large scale research throughout their school to identify setting specific strengths and challenges to adolescent help-seeking; work with staff and governors to support pupil participation; develop staff training with YP to skill-up staff and facilitate the co-production of a pastoral support policy which is used by the whole school community as a working document. This systemic EP support can support schools to promote adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being and ultimately increase students' resilience, improve early identification and decrease the number of YP presenting with diagnosable mental health conditions in the UK.

5.5 Strengths and limitations of study

This section starts by discussing how the quality criteria (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), introduced in section 3.2.1, has been applied to ensure the quality of the study. My reflections on using an inclusive research approach are then used to draw out the key strengths of this research. Finally, this section ends by alerting the reader to the possible limitations of the study, in order for these to be taken into consideration whilst reading and

if intending to transfer the findings to similar sample sets. Suggestions for future research are also discussed.

5.5.1 Quality criteria

Nind (2014) doubts that criteria for quality assurance used for other forms of research are applicable to inclusive research, like this study, in the same way due to the new challenges this way of approaching research presents. However, through my consideration of these four criteria, I have aimed to ensure that this piece of research provides sufficient evidence and transparency to be considered a helpful contribution to research in this area whilst remaining as inclusive as possible.

5.5.1.1 Confirmability

In order to achieve confirmability, researchers should provide rich and transparent descriptions of the research process and ensure interpretations are grounded in the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Korstjens and Moser, 2018). In order to ensure this in the current study, where possible I used the words of the YP when carrying out the initial coding process to help ensure the final categories were grounded in the data.

5.5.1.2 Dependability

Throughout the research process I used Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach in a systematic way to achieve dependability. Similar to ensuring confirmability, dependability requires a robust audit trail to ensure transparency in the process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

In order to demonstrate confirmability and dependability in this research, I have completed an ongoing audit trail which includes writing memos and a reflexive journal, which is also in line with the constructionist grounded theory methodological approach (Charmaz, 2014), as well as keeping field notes throughout. I have also presented my research in writing this dissertation which helps to make the research process transparent. Extracts of my reflective journal and memos can be found in Appendix 31 and 32.

5.5.1.3 Credibility

In order to ensure credibility Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that researchers used the following strategies: prolonged engagement, triangulation, persistent observation and member checking.

Below shows the strategies used to ensure credibility in the current study:

Table 5: Credibility strategies

Credibility strategy	Description of credibility strategy	Evidence in current study
Prolonged engagement	Prolonged engagement ensures that enough time is spent with the participants and within the research setting in order to build trust and understand the data collected (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Sim and Sharp, 1998).	Researcher made several visits to the setting to build trusting relationship with pupil researchers.
Triangulation	Triangulation involves cross-checking data by using alternative methods or data sources (Bryman, 2016).	Focus group data was gathered from three schools and compared with one another.
Persistent observation	Persistent observation is the process of reviewing the data and revising the codes, categories and concepts that are developed through data analysis (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).	Continuous reviewing data analysis coding and categories as in line with constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014).
Member checks	Member checking involves going back to the participants with the data analysis and gaining feedback in order to avoid misinterpreting participant views and ensuring that participants experiences are accurately represented (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This can, and should, lead participants to challenge the analysis and changes should be made accordingly (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).	Member checking carried out with pupil researchers. Asked for feedback on focused coding. Amendments were made accordingly.

5.5.1.4 Transferability

In the current study, in order to enable readers to make a reasonable judgement as to whether the findings can be transferred to a different sample, in line with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) guidance, I have ensured that my methods section includes a rich description of all aspects of the research process. This includes detailed information about the participants, the settings and how the methods were applied throughout.

5.5.1.5 Researcher reflexivity

In order to aid the reader to be able to make further judgements as to whether the study may be applicable to alternative sample sets, contexts or settings, Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999) highlight the importance of the researcher explicitly stating their theoretical perspective, values and reasons for being interested in the particular topic. However, Lynch (2000) criticises the concept as having various meanings and states that it does not help to gain objectivity in a qualitative study; he therefore suggests it should be used tentatively. Within the current study, the reflexive process aims to provide some transparency in the research process in line with establishing dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Korstjens and Moser, 2018) as well as being a key part of the grounded theory methodological approach.

Throughout the study, I engaged primarily in self-reflexivity and recorded how my involvement impacted on, and shaped, the research and analysis (Malaurent and Avison, 2017) through a reflective journal. This helped me to acknowledge the interplay between myself as the researcher, the participants and the social setting (Oliver, 2013). However, I also recruited pupil researchers who led some aspects of the research, gave feedback during the analysis process and gave a reflexive account of their involvement in the research process. Their reflexive account can be found in Appendix 20. This could therefore be seen to create higher credibility as a result of being able to compare interpretations and therefore being less reliant upon my own personal reflections and interpretations of the data. Engaging the YP in being reflexive was novel in comparison with other research in this area.

5.5.2 Researcher reflections on the inclusive approach to research

I have really enjoyed carrying out this piece of research and illuminating the views of the YP involved. My reasons for choosing a grounded theory methodology were twofold: firstly, as it was an inclusive piece of research, it allowed the study to evolve in the direction the YP wanted to take it and secondly, the constructivist nature of the grounded theory highlights the subjective role of the researchers within it (Charmaz, 2014). Although this research claims to be inclusive, I did not involve the YP at the planning stage of the research. This was partly due to already having an interest in this topic and wanting to explore it further and also due to the time restraints on conducting the research. Despite this, I feel strongly that I am able to claim the inclusive nature of the study and have involved the pupil researchers at a much higher level than previous research in this area.

Carrying out the pupil researcher training and observing the focus groups was a privilege. It demonstrated how conceptual YP can be about topics relating to them and how their ideas could helpfully inform policy and practice. The pupil researchers were only involved in the analysis of data through the member checking process. My reasons for only involving them at this stage was primarily due to time restrictions, as it would have taken a considerable amount of time to train the pupil researcher to assist in carrying out the whole analysis. This would also have required the pupil researchers to miss a considerable amount of lesson time, which I felt may have reduced the number of willing participating schools. Engaging the pupil researchers in the data analysis process was one of the most challenging aspects of the inclusive research approach as they found going back through the transcripts a bit overwhelming. In hindsight, involving the pupil researchers at the theoretical category stage may have been more helpful and more engaging for them.

Despite this, involving the pupil researchers in the member checks allowed me to refine some of the emerging categories and led to the development of the category ‘learning the skills’. Although the YP’s discussions around learning to seek help were acknowledged during the initial coding stage, the pupil researchers identified this concept as an explicit skill that YP need to learn and need adult support with. This highlighted the value of carrying out the research inclusively.

At the data analysis stage, I also decided to carry out a thematic analysis of the SENCO interview and analysis of school policies data rather than also using a grounded theory analysis approach. I chose to do this to ensure the YP's views were the focal point of the whole research. I also wanted to develop the YP's views around the topic as opposed to that of the SENCOs and school policies.

Carrying out this piece of research has highlighted the differences between perspectives of YP and adults and the policies in schools. It has supported my personal development as an EP in terms of actively gaining the views of CYP in my work whenever possible. It has also supported my consultation skills as I feel more confident in being able to reframe the views of staff to listen and respond to the views of their students. Furthermore, the findings of this research has led me to question my assumptions around working more holistically and joined-up, for example, wanting SEND provision and SEMH provision and systems in school to work together rather than separate. Although adults often assume this to be the most effective way of working, the YP in this study appear to find some of these dual roles and overlapping systems confusing. This could be causing barriers to YP seeking help.

Using an inclusive research approach to compare the YP's views with the supplementary data highlighted the importance of involving YP in research and gaining their views. It provided a more in-depth insight into the views of YP around help-seeking for their emotional well-being in school and drew out how their views contrasted to the perceptions of the SENCOs and the information provided within the relevant school policies. In turn, this indicates the need for YP's voices to be more prominent within school policies and for SENCOs and other staff to have a greater awareness of what helps and hinders students' help-seeking behaviours.

Carrying out the research inclusively and training the pupil researchers to lead the focus groups led to discussions going in the direction the YP took it in. If I had led these focus groups myself, then I do not think that the YP would have talked as openly. The YP were aware of, and spoke quite openly about, some of the things they want adults to do when

they go to them for emotional support. Their comments on this seemed realistic and suggested that they would have some helpful insights if asked to contribute to a school policy around this. The use of the focus groups was also a really helpful way for eliciting their views and ideas around a topic such as this. This method appeared to empower the YP and make them feel heard as well as allowing them to get things off of their chest in a safe environment. This was also corroborated by some of the YP themselves.

Researcher reflections were also recorded from each of the participating schools. Involving YP in the reflexive process had not been carried out in previous research in this area. These reflections highlighted how much the YP enjoyed taking part in the research process, how much they learnt from being involved and the therapeutic nature of sharing their views within a focus group.

One of the pupil participants made the following comment during the focus group:

> *"(I can)…especially trust anybody in this room because everybody feels the same way" (The Doctor).*

This highlights the therapeutic nature of YP taking part in focus groups and how YP develop trust in those within the focus group due to all having had the same or similar experiences. Furthermore, the following excerpts are from the pupil researcher reflections:

> *"it was nice to be able to talk about adults and not get into trouble about it. Being honest about your opinion" (Julie).*

> *"I let it all out and it felt good to let it go" (Emily).*

> *"(I) Learnt to talk to adults and not hold back. Learnt how to run a focus group and would feel confident leading one again. It was helpful to get your feelings and emotions, talk to people and see if they had any good advice for us. There was some good advice in the group" (Luke).*

Some of the issues discussed in focus group 3 were clearly very difficult for the YP to share. I had concerns about a couple of the YP in the group but checked with them afterwards to see if they required any additional support; in line with ethical guidelines (BPS, 2018). Interestingly, although they were discussing some emotive topics within the group, they all reported how good they felt after the group and how it had helped them to feel better and as a way of gaining advice from others. This finding supports those of Anderson and Graham (2016) who also found that participants benefitted from the process of being involved in a focus group.

Throughout the study, the YP referred to the therapeutic nature of the focus groups, as also found in a study by Harper and Cole (2012). This highlights how involving CYP in research and actively gaining their views on important topics can also act as a form of early intervention, a key priority according to the Children's Society (2008). The pupil researcher's reflections on being involved and taking part in research can be found in Appendix 20.

5.5.3 Limitations of study and suggestions for future research

The three participating schools all had similarities and differences in their support structures and systems around supporting and promoting mental health and emotional well-being in school. For example, they all had a form of pastoral support base and pastoral staff and all offered ELSA. However, one of the schools had recently had emotion coaching staff training and another had access to school counsellors. As the findings from the three schools were reported collectively, I was unable to draw out any difference these different forms of support made to YP's help-seeking behaviours, if at all any.

Within this study, I concluded theoretical sampling when reaching theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999) rather than theoretical saturation. Myers (2009) acknowledges the challenges of theoretical saturation for novice researchers as it can be exhaustive. In the current study, within the time restraints imposed in carrying out doctoral research, the analysis cannot claim theoretical saturation. Dey (1999) suggests using 'theoretical sufficiency' instead of 'theoretical saturation' is usually more appropriate within grounded theory studies and

believes that the categories are suggested by the data as opposed to an exact inference. When data collection and analysis was completed for the third school, it felt appropriate to cease theoretical sampling as the newly evolved research questions had been reasonably answered therefore reaching theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999).

Finally, this study represents a very small sample within a rural county within England. The findings are therefore very specific to the individual participants. It is likely that the findings would be very different within more urban communities which may have larger schools and therefore more pastoral support available. However, given the similarities between my findings and previous research, it is likely that this study reflects the views of many adolescents to some extent. Possible areas of future research are considered next.

Future research may need to further explore YP's understanding of what classifies as a 'bad problem' and what YP mean by being 'scared' to seek help. In this study I have suggested that when YP talk about a 'bad' problem they could be referring to issues around safeguarding. Future research could explore CYP's understanding of safeguarding and uncover whether they understand what adults can keep confidential and what they cannot. It is possible that their current understanding of adults' safeguarding responsibilities is an additional barrier to them seeking help in school. Clarifying this could help adults to find ways to explain these confidentiality limits to CYP in a clear and more explicit way.

Similarly, further exploration of what YP are scared of when they seek help from adults in school for their emotional well-being would be fruitful. It would be interesting to uncover whether being 'scared' is in relation to their previous experiences of seeking help or whether this is about the unknowns of seeking help and their lacking help-seeking education. Moreover, this will be helpful in further breaking down barriers to adolescent help-seeing.

Additionally, further exploring the link between the strength of emotion and the impact on help-seeking would warrant further investigation as this is conflicting in the evidence at

present. A better understanding of this could help adults support those YP who are currently not seeking help for extreme feelings, such as, hopelessness and helplessness.

Finally, another area of future research could be around looking at whether self-referral to services, rather than only being able to access these through referrals by adults in school, would lend itself to promoting help-seeking as YP may feel more empowered and independent. Alternatively, would YP self-refer when they do not need help which would be a form of non-adaptive help-seeking as discussed previously. Additionally, there are likely to be capacity difficulties with this in terms of school resources.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of overall findings

This section summarises the key findings from this study and what needs to change within schools to further encourage adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being.

6.1.1 What factors do young people use to decide whether to seek help from an adult in school to support their emotional well-being?

This study has shown that adolescents experience decision-making difficulties around help-seeking for their emotional well-being in school. We know that this is due to the changes in brain structure and their underdeveloped pre-frontal cortex at this stage in their development (Casey, Jones and Hare, 2008; Siegal, 2014). The YP in this study reported to consider a range of factors when making a decision about whether to seek help from an adult in school. *Figure 17* in section 5.2 presents the internal decision-making process as found in this study. Their considerations came under the following categories:

- ***Positive relationships***

  This consideration was around whether the YP had a trusted adult they felt comfortable seeking help from in school. This was required to be a reciprocal relationship with a preferred adult which had developed over time.

- ***The inbetweeners***

  This category highlighted the continuum, and YP's conflict, between being dependent on adults and their strive to be independent, active agents. Being 'in-between' a child and an adult leading to confusions around whether to seek help.

- ***Containing overwhelming feelings***

  YP consider whether they can manage their overwhelming emotions independently or whether they needed support to avoid creating additional problems for

themselves. Often this depended on the type and strength of the emotion the YP were experiencing.

- ***Protecting image***

  The YP consider around how they will be seen by others when seeking help. They have concerns around whether adult support will be discreet and how it will impact on their reputation and social networks.

- ***Unhelpful adult responses***

  Concerns that adults will either not resolve a YP's problem, have little impact or will make the problem worse was a key consideration for the YP. This was often based upon previous experiences or socially constructed discourses.

- ***Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable***

  Whether an adult would take YP seriously and be able to relate to a YP's problem or emotional need was a common concern for the YP. The YP also questioned whether adults in school have time for them and want to support their emotional well-being.

- ***Learning to seek help***

  The YP had fears over what might happen if they seek help from adults in school. Equally this category highlights YP's concerns over whether they could communicate their emotional needs adequately.

The YP in this study often made this decision based upon their previous experiences of help-seeking. This is why it is crucial that adults in school ensure that help-seeking is a positive experience. In order to do this, schools need a greater understanding of this internal decision-making process so that they can promote the development of healthy and adaptive help-seeking strategies which sets a blueprint for future help-seeking. This has the potential to significantly reduce the number of mental health disorders in YP.

When each of the categories listed above are considered and understood by adults in school, systems and policies can be developed to ensure that adolescent help-seeking is encouraged. Without an understanding of what helps and hinders YP's help-seeking behaviours for their emotional well-being in school, help-seeking cannot be promoted. What helps and hinders adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being in schools has been summarised in the table below:

Category	What hinders help-seeking?	What helps help-seeking?
Positive relationships	Lack of positive relationships with adults in school	A positive relationship with an adult in school
The inbetweeners	Wanting to resolve a problem independently	Adults guiding YP to resolve problems themselves with support
Containing overwhelming feelings	Being overwhelmed by the intensity of an emotion	Adults supporting YP to manage an overwhelming emotion leading to feeling safe
Protecting image	Help-seeking that leads to damaged reputations or breakdowns in peer relationships	Adults providing discreet support to YP and acknowledging their need to protect their image
Unhelpful adult responses	Adults not resolving YP's problems or having a lack of impact when they do become involved	Adults taking YP's problems seriously and dealing with them according to school systems and policies
Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable	When adults are inaccessible e.g. too busy, or cannot relate to adolescent problems	Adults are available and can relate to YP's problems and emotions
Learning to seek help	Adults assuming that YP know how to seek help and YP's fears of what might happen	Adults teaching YP how to seek help and helping them overcome the unknowns

Table 6: What helps and hinders help-seeking

6.1.2 What additional skills do young people need in order to seek help for their emotional well-being from adults in school?

The YP in this study highlighted their need to be taught how to seek help. They suggested that they need to be explicitly taught how they transfer and translate internal, personal thoughts and feelings into the social and interpersonal world in order to effectively seek help and develop their adaptive help-seeking skills. This help-seeking education needs to include strategies for asking for help leading to the type of support YP require, as well as information to help YP overcome their fears around what might happen when they seek help. This was a key finding of this study as it has been relatively neglected in the previous literature despite it being crucial in promoting future help-seeking. How to teach this skill could warrant further research with YP to develop a sound evidence base.

6.1.3 Conclusions drawn from comparing the data

The tables of comparison below, taken from *Figure 18,* shows how little the YP's views were in agreement with the views of the SENCO or linked to what was documented about emotional well-being support in the school policies. Although I would expect these views to be different, in order to facilitate student help-seeking, the SENCOs need a better understanding of YP's help-seeking behaviours in the school context. Equally, school policies also need to reflect the views and perspectives of YP.

Similarities and differences between YP's views and SENCO's views

Similarities	Differences
• They both acknowledged the role of **positive relationships** • They acknowledged that YP want to be **empowered** • They identified that teachers do not have enough **time**	• The SENCOs did not acknowledge **bullying** as a key cause of poor emotional well-being in school • Differing **priorities** between student emotional well-being and academic achievement • The SENCOs highlighted **poor staff emotional well-being** as a concern

Similarities and differences between the SENCO views and school policies

Similarities	Differences
• Both refer to **preventative work**	• SENCOs discuss **pastoral support** resources whereas the policies do not detail this

Similarities between YP's views and school policies

Similarities	Differences
• The policies in school 1 identified **positive relationships** as important	• Differences in how **bullying** is dealt with in school • Focuses on **behaviour management** systems • Highlights relevant **legislation** • Clarifies **roles and responsibilities** of staff

6.2. Originality of research

One of the unique contributions of this study is the inclusive research approach. Previous research has gained the views of YP via methods including focus groups however, none of the studies reviewed have trained YP as researchers to facilitate these groups as well as asking YP to contribute to the data analysis. The findings demonstrate the usefulness of using inclusive research and gaining YP's views in order to better understand what will help to encourage help-seeking. Furthermore, comparing the YP's views with supplementary data to draw out the key differences was also novel in this research area.

This has expanded our current understanding of YP's help-seeking behaviours in school for support with their emotional well-being by illustrating the complex nature of how YP decide

whether to seek this type of help. The internal decision-making process adds to the body of current evidence around YP's help-seeking behaviours for their emotional well-being in school.

This study has identified seven key categories that YP consider when deciding whether to seek help from adults in school. The findings have extended existing knowledge by identifying the importance of mutuality within positive relationships in relation to adolescent help-seeking for their emotional well-being in school. It suggests that YP are on a continuum between being dependent on adults and independent beings and that YP use a trial and error approach to move from one end of this continuum to the other. Often, YP only seek help once they have tried to resolve a difficulty independently and this has not been successful. The findings also show that YP often seek help for support managing a particular emotion, rather than the problem which has elicited the emotion. This highlights their difficulty in regulating their emotions and need for adult support.

The YP identified some methods for adults to protect their public image in school when they are emotionally distressed and decide to seek help. This included adults providing discreet support and a safe and private space for YP to express their emotions. In addition to this, the findings show how adults in school are often unavailable to support YP's emotional needs and this can make YP feel pushed away and unsupported. Consequently, this impacts negatively on their emotional well-being. Finally, the study drew out the importance of YP being explicitly taught how to seek help for their emotional well-being. The YP specified that they needed the skills to communicate their emotions and needs to get the correct level and type of support they require.

Comparing the views of the YP to the supplementary data identified some key factors that neither the school SENCOs or school policies currently consider, such as, whether the emotional well-being support they offer their students protects their image. Equally, there were conflicts between the views of the YP and the supplementary data, for example, in terms of how bullying is dealt with in school. This further identifies a place for co-constructed policies and practices within school as well as involving YP at a much higher

level than the tokenistic way they are often consulted in schools (Anderson and Graham, 2016; Rudduck and Flutter, 2000).

6.3 Concluding comments

Carrying out this research has been hugely rewarding and I have felt privileged to be able to work so closely with YP to truly listen to and share their views. In doing this, the findings identify significant disparities between the views of the YP and the systems and practices already in place in their schools. I hope that this will alert readers to the importance of carrying out future research with CYP and incorporating these inclusive ways of working within educational settings on a day to day basis, particularly around topics that impact them. Society still have a long way to go in shifting their practices and assumptions around CYP, particularly adolescents in relation to their emotional well-being as identified within this study. Adults and researchers need to actively involve CYP in order to prevent a further rise in mental health difficulties.

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Appendix 1

Ethical approval

Hi Kelly,

Sorry for delay in responding to the changes you have forwarded.; the SPS Research Ethics Committee is in the process of change of chair at present.

However, having discussed the changes with the outgoing chair, I can confirm that these are satisfactory and your ethics application has been approved.

Wishing you the best of luck with your research.

Aggie

Dr Agnes Bezzina
Admissions Tutor
Teaching Fellow in Social Work
University of Bristol
School for Policy Studies
8 Priory Road
Bristol, BS8 1TZ, UK

Appendix 2

Systematic literature search table

1	Terms used	British Education Index	ERIC	Teacher Reference Center	Education Abstracts	PsycINFO
1	Pupil **OR** student **OR** adolescen* **OR** children **OR** young people	72,650	976,974	195,561	331,774	820,359
	AND					
2	Emotional support **OR** seeking help	252	3,049	335	1,349	2,640
	AND					
3	School staff **OR** school based adults **OR** helper	6	73	6	27	24
	Relevant (after reading abstract)	5	13	1	8	5

Date initially conducted: 04.01.18 (search from 2005-2018)

2	Terms used	British Education Index	ERIC	Teacher Reference Center	Education Abstracts	PsycINFO
1	Pupil **OR** student **OR** adolescen* **OR** children **OR** young people	72,650	325,498	195,561	331,774	820,359
	AND					
2	Emotional support **OR** seeking help	252	1,933	335	1,349	2,640
	AND					
3	voice **OR** view **OR** story	25	154	26	60	92
	Relevant (after reading abstract)	3	8	5	3	5

3	Terms used	British Education Index	ERIC	Teacher Reference Center	Education Abstracts	PsycINFO
1	Pupil **OR** student **OR** adolescen* **OR** children **OR** young people	72,650	325,498	195,561	331,774	820,359
	AND					
2	Emotional support **OR** wellbeing	566	1,572	520	2,222	4,820

	AND					
3	Help seeking **OR** seeking help	6	17	2	15	52
	Relevant (after reading abstract)	1	3	0	2	9

4	**Terms used**	**British Education Index**	**ERIC**	**Teacher Reference Center**	**Education Abstracts**	**PsycINFO**
1	Pupil **OR** student **OR** adolescen* **OR** children **OR** young people	75,650	325,498	195,561	331,774	820,359
	AND					
2	School staff **OR** school based adults **OR** helper	366	2,913	1,063	1,460	1,673
	AND					
3	Relationship* or help seeking	89	946 (filtered emotional support = 21)	158	251 (filtered emotional support = 8)	402 (filtered emotional support = 17)
	Relevant (after reading abstract)	6	3	4	1	6

5	**Terms used**	**British Education Index**	**ERIC**	**Teacher Reference Center**	**Education Abstracts**	**PsycINFO**
1	Pupil **OR** student **OR** adolescen* **OR** children **OR** young people	75,650	325,498	195,561	331,774	820,359
	AND					
2	Help seeking	132	992	148	650	1,884
	AND					
3	School* or education	119	829 (filtered school staff search = 19)	136	459 (filtered school staff search = 14)	688 (filtered school staff search = 17)
	Relevant (after reading abstract)	14	5	14	6	9

	British Education Index	**ERIC**	**Teacher Reference Center**	**Education Abstracts**	**PsycINFO**	**Total**

Total	29	32	24	20	34	139

In addition to this search, relevant educational psychology journals were searched including Educational Psychology in Practice and 'snowballing' searching was carried out throughout the review.

Appendix 3

Letter to Head Teacher

UNIVERSITY of BRISTOL

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ
T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755
F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756
W: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/SPS

Date

Dear Head Teacher,

My name is Kelly Osborne and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently on placement within the Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

In order to complete my training through the University of Bristol I am required to carry out a research study. I am interested in gaining the pupil voice to understand the characteristics of school staff that they perceive to act as barriers and facilitators when they seek support for their emotional well-being in school.

I am writing to your setting as I am interested in working with secondary aged pupils in year 7-9. Your school was recommended by your Educational Psychologist as a school that has support in place to meet the emotional needs of your young people. They also thought that you might be interested in taking part in a piece of research. I have attached an information sheet that provides detailed information about the research process.

Should you be interested in taking part in my research, or require any further information, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Kelly Osborne
Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted]

Appendix 4

Head Teacher information sheet

Head Teacher Information Sheet: What does the research involve?

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to uncover pupil's perceptions of how the characteristics of staff help them when they require support with their emotional wellbeing. It aims to highlight the perceived barriers and facilitators for pupils accessing support from school staff. The findings aim to indicate possible ways to inform policy and improve practice to encourage more young people to seek support in the future. This is in line with Government initiatives around promoting early intervention for mental health and wellbeing in children and young people.

Who will be carrying out the research?
This research is being carried out by Kelly Osborne, a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol and currently working for Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Why has my setting been chosen?
Your setting has been put forward by your link EP as a school that has support in place to meet the emotional needs of your students. I will be working with 4 schools over the course of the study.

What will happen if I take part?
If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to distribute some flyers to recruit 2 pupil researchers to help me with the research and 4 additional pupils to take part in a focus group. The focus group will take place in school during normal school hours but will be at a convenient time and day to suit the school. I would also like to look at some of your school policies and interview your school SENCO, or someone who is aware of the support available in your school for students who require any emotional support. Pupils are not required to be accessing any particular intervention to support their needs; they are just required to have turned to a member of staff to help them to manage their emotions on at least one occasion in the last term. Participation is completely optional.

The research process and what will be expected of your setting is detailed in the table below:

Order	Activity	Time taken/expectations of setting
1.	Head teacher agrees for the setting to take part in the study	Read information sheet and sign to acknowledge that you are happy for your school to be involved in the study

2.	School distributes flyers to recruit participants	School to distribute flyers to pupils
3.	Information sheets and consent forms go out to potential participants, their parents and school SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff)	The school will be provided with an information sheet and consent form for the SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff). They will also be provided with information sheets and consent forms for interested pupil researchers, pupil participants and their parents
4.	2 pupil researchers and 4 additional pupil participants are recruited	Schools to collate consent forms to be passed onto the researcher
5.	Researcher to review relevant school policies	Make relevant policies available to researcher
6.	Researcher to meet with pupil researchers to gain consent/answer any questions	School to release pupil researchers from class to meet with researcher in a quiet room during the normal school day for up to one hour
7.	Researcher to meet with pupil researchers to provide training on how to lead a focus group and design focus group/interview questions	School to release pupil researchers from class to meet with researcher in a quiet room during the normal school day for one-two hours
8.	Pupil researchers to lead focus group with the 4 consenting additional participants (researcher will also be present)	School to release pupil researchers and pupil participants from class to take part in a focus group. This will need to take place in a quiet room (where we will not be disturbed due to the recording) during the normal school day for one hour
9.	Researcher to carry out semi-structured interview with SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff)	Release the school SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff) for a 1 hour interview with the researcher and provide a quiet place for this to take place during the normal school day
10.	Researcher to go away to transcribe and analyse data	N/A
11.	Researcher to meet with pupil researchers to discuss and check findings	School to release pupil researchers from class to meet with researcher in a quiet room during the normal school day for one hour

As the researcher will be drawing on a grounded theory methodology, the findings from each school will be used to inform the areas to be explored with the pupils in the next participating school, along with the help of pupil researchers from that setting. Joint

feedback will be provided as key categories which have been formed through working with each of the participating schools and validated by the pupil researchers.

What are the advantages of taking part?
This study will allow your school to empower pupils to have their voices heard. The findings can be used to inform policy and improve practice in order to encourage pupils to seek support from staff in school. It may also highlight any staff training needs and enable you to develop services and/or interventions to meet the needs of your students whilst promoting mental health and wellbeing.

What will happen if I don't take part?
Participation is voluntary. If you choose not to take part in the study then no further communication will be made. You are also able to withdraw from the study at any point up until one week after the focus group and interview has been conducted.

Anonymisation and limits of confidentiality
The names of participants will be replaced with codes which will be used in the data and findings. There will also be strict confidentiality guidelines during the focus group and interview regarding mentioning no names or giving information that makes others easily identifiable. Although all efforts will be made to ensure that the identities of others are hidden, there are limits to confidentiality which the participants will be made aware of. For example, school staff will be aware of the pupils involved in the research study from their school, as arrangements will need to be made for them to attend the focus group. Additionally, although participants will be told that the information they share will be kept confidential, if the researcher believes the young person or another young person is at risk of harm then the school safeguarding procedures will be followed.

What will the information be used for?
The data collected will be tape recorded, transcribed and anonymised for the purpose of the researcher's thesis. Anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol so that other researchers have access to the data for future use.

The findings of the study will be shared with the settings and the Somerset Educational Psychology Service. The thesis will be available in the University of Bristol Library and the researcher may choose to publish a paper or present the findings to other interested parties. The Data Protection Act will be adhered to throughout the research.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact the researcher on the details below.

Researcher:
Kelly Osborne, University of Bristol
[redacted]

This study has gained ethical approval from the **School for Policy Studies Ethics Committee**, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX. For any concerns regarding the process of this research study, or if you have any complaints, then please contact the researcher's supervisor on the details below.

Supervisor:
Beth Tarleton, University of Bristol
Tel: 01173310976
Email: beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Kelly Osborne
Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted]

Appendix 5

SENCO information sheet

Information sheet: SENCO
What does the research involve?

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of staff when they seek support for their emotional well-being. It aims to highlight the perceived barriers and facilitators for pupils accessing support from school staff in order to encourage more young people seek support in the future. The findings aim to indicate possible ways to inform policy and improve practice to encourage more young people seek support in the future. This is in line with Government initiatives around promoting early intervention for mental health and wellbeing in children and young people.

Who will be carrying out the research?
This research is being carried out by Kelly Osborne who is a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol and currently working for Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Why have I been chosen?
Your school has been recommended by your link EP as a school that has good provision in place for supporting young people's emotional needs. They also thought that your school might be interested in taking part in a piece of research. During the research process, it will be helpful to carry out a one hour interview with you to gain some further information regarding the organisation of support in place in your school and how the emotional needs of your students are managed. I will be working with 4 schools over the course of the study.

What will happen if I take part?
If you agree to take part in the study then you would be expected to take part in a semi-structured interview. This interview will be conducted in school on a day and at a time that suits you. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be digitally recorded and transcribed.

For your information, the research process and what will be expected of your setting is detailed in the table below:

Order	Activity	Time taken/expectations of setting
1.	Head teacher agrees for the setting to take part in the study	Read information sheet and sign to acknowledge that you are happy for your school to be involved in the study
2.	School distributes flyers to recruit participants	School to distribute flyers to pupils

3.	Information sheets and consent forms go out to potential participants, their parents and school SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff)	The school will be provided with an information sheet and consent form for the SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff). They will also be provided with information sheets and consent forms for interested pupil researchers, pupil participants and their parents
4.	2 pupil researchers and 4 additional pupil participants are recruited	Schools to collate consent forms to be passed onto the researcher
5.	Researcher to review relevant school policies	Make relevant policies available to researcher
6.	Researcher to meet with pupil researchers to gain consent/answer any questions	School to release pupil researchers from class to meet with researcher in a quiet room during the normal school day for up to one hour
7.	Researcher to meet with pupil researchers to provide training on how to lead a focus group and help design focus group/interview questions	School to release pupil researchers from class to meet with researcher in a quiet room during the normal school day for one-two hours
8.	Pupil researchers to lead focus group with the 4 consenting additional participants (researcher will also be present)	School to release pupil researchers and pupil participants from class to take part in a focus group. This will need to take place in a quiet room (where we will not be disturbed due to the recording) during the normal school day for one hour
9.	Researcher to carry out semi-structured interview with SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff)	Release the school SENCO (or other appropriate member of staff) for a 1 hour interview with the researcher and provide a quiet place for this to take place during the normal school day
10.	Researcher to go away to transcribe and analyse data	N/A
11.	Researcher to meet with pupil researchers to discuss and check findings	School to release pupil researchers from class to meet with researcher in a quiet room during the normal school day for one hour

Pupils are not required to be accessing any particular intervention to support their needs; they are just required to have turned to a member of staff to help them to manage their emotions on at least one occasion in the last term. Participation is completely optional.

As I will be drawing on a grounded theory methodology, I will be using the findings from each school to inform the areas I will explore in the next participating school along with the help of pupil researchers from that setting. Joint feedback will be provided as key categories which have been formed through working with each of the participating schools and validated by the pupil researchers.

What are the advantages of taking part?
This study will allow your school to empower pupils to have their voices heard. The findings can be used to inform policy and improve practice in order to encourage pupils to seek support from staff in school. It will highlight any staff training needs and enable you to develop services and/or interventions to meet the needs of your students whilst promoting mental health and wellbeing.

What will happen if I don't take part?
Participation is voluntary. If you choose not to take part in the study then an alternative member of staff, who has an awareness of the support systems in place to meet young people's emotional needs, will be asked if they would like to take part. You are also able to withdraw from the study at any point up until one week after the interview has been conducted.

Anonymisation and limits of confidentiality
The names of participants will be replaced with codes which will be used in the data and findings. There will also be strict confidentiality guidelines during the focus group and interview regarding mentioning no names or giving information that makes others easily identifiable. Although all efforts will be made to ensure that the identities of others are hidden, there are limits to confidentiality such as, some members of staff may know that you have taken part in the study. Your school safeguarding procedures will be followed if any information is shared whereby the researcher feels a young person may be at risk of harm.

What will my information be used for?
The data collected will be recorded, transcribed and anonymised for the purpose of my thesis. Anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol so that other researchers have access to the data for future use.

The findings of the study will be shared with the settings and the Somerset Educational Psychology Service. The thesis will be available in the University of Bristol Library and I may choose to publish a paper or present the findings to other interested parties. I will adhere to the Data Protection Act throughout.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Researcher:

[redacted]

[redacted]

This study has gained ethical approval from the **Norah Fry Research Centre Ethics Committee**, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX. For any concerns regarding the process of this research study, or if you have any complaints, then please contact my research supervisor on the details below.

Supervisor:
Beth Tarleton, University of Bristol
Tel: 01173310976
Email: beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Kelly Osborne
Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted]

Appendix 6

Pupil Researcher information sheet

Information sheet: Pupil Researcher

This information sheet gives all of the details you need to know to decide whether or not to become a pupil researcher in my study. Please read it carefully, talk to your parents about it and ask an adult if you have any questions.

What is this research all about?

I am interested in finding out what pupils think is helpful and unhelpful when they go to an adult in school for help when they are struggling with their emotions.

I think that it is important to hear your views as the pupils about this so that we can help make things even better for you when you need a bit of extra help with your emotional well-being.

Who will be carrying out the research?

My name is Kelly Osborne and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. I am studying at the University of Bristol but also work for Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Am I the right pupil for the research?

I am looking for 2 pupil researchers to help me with my study. You will need to have gone to a member of school staff for help when you have struggled with managing your emotions at least once in the past term. You may have help more often to help you with managing your emotions.

You will also need to feel confident enough to:

- talk to the researcher
- learn how to lead a small group discussion with some other pupils from your school
- help think of some questions for the group discussion and an interview the researcher will be carrying out.

What will happen if I take part?

	Activity	Commitment from pupil researcher
1.	Meet with Kelly (with other pupil researcher) to talk about research and answer any questions you have	Up to 1 hour meeting in school (during the school day)
2.	Meet with Kelly (with other pupil researcher) who will train you in how to lead a focus group (small group discussion) and you will help come up with some focus group/interview questions	1-2 hour training session in school (during the school day)
3.	Lead focus group with other pupil researcher (Kelly will also be there if you need any help) The focus group will be tape recorded and written up by Kelly	1 hour to lead focus group in school (during the school day)

4.	Meet with Kelly (with other pupil researcher) to check the findings	1 hour meeting in school (during the school day)

What are the benefits of taking part?

Being involved in this study as a pupil researcher is an exciting opportunity for you to have your views heard, learn some new skills and gain confidence.

What will happen if I don't take part?

You do not have to take part in this study unless you really want to and your parents agree to it. If you change your mind about taking part in the focus group then you can. You can withdraw from the study up until one week after the focus group.

Will my name be used? Who will find out what I say?

I will talk to you about confidentiality which means, not sharing things that others say and not mentioning other people's names during the group discussion or afterwards. It is really important that you do not share other people's information.

Your name will not be used when I type up the focus group recording or when I write up the research. I will use a code name for you instead. However, some information you share may be able to be identified by others for example, if you have told a member of staff the same story you choose to share in the focus group, then they may know this was you. Finally, although I aim to keep the information you share confidential, if I think that you or another young person isn't safe, then I will have to share this information with some other adults in your school.

What will my information be used for?

Once the focus group is finished then I will listen to the recording and type it all up. I will look at the information I have gathered and think about what it means. I will be asking you to check this information before writing up the study. The University of Bristol will then keep this information safe on a password protected server. This information can then be used in the future by other researchers.

Once the research is written up I will share this with the schools involved, the Somerset Educational Psychology Service and some other people that are interested in what we found out.

If you want to know more or have a question then you (with your parent's permission) or your parent can contact me.

This study has gained ethical approval from the **School for Policy Studies Ethics Committee**, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX.

For concerns or complaints about this research you can also contact my supervisor Beth.

Supervisor:

Beth Tarleton, University of Bristol

Tel: 01173310976

Email: beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

Kelly Osborne

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Bristol

[redacted]

Appendix 7

Parent (pupil researcher) information sheet

Information sheet: Parent (pupil researchers)
What does the research involve?

Your young person has shown interest in taking part in my research as a pupil researcher. This information sheet will explain the study and detail their involvement if you and they choose to take part. Please discuss this with your child and if you are happy for your young person to take part then please complete and return the consent form. Alternatively, if you do not wish for your young person to take part then no further contact will be made. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of staff when they seek support with their emotional well-being. It aims to highlight the perceived barriers and facilitators for pupils accessing support from school staff in order to encourage more young people seek support in the future.

Who will be carrying out the research?
This research is being carried out by Kelly Osborne who is a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol and currently working for Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Why has my young person been chosen?
Over the course of the research, I will be working with 4 schools. Within those schools I have asked for 2 pupils to come forward who would like to take part as pupil researchers.

Your child has expressed an interest in being a pupil researcher. Their participation is completely optional. The main requirement is that your young person has sought help or support for managing their emotions from an adult in school over the last term. They will also need to feel confident enough to spend some time working with the researcher and leading a small focus group with the support of the researcher. Their involvement will take place over the course of approximately 2 months.

What will happen if I consent for my young person to take part?
If you agree for your young person to take part in the study then they will be asked to take part in the following activities:

	Activity	Commitment from pupil researcher
1.	Meet with Kelly (with other pupil researcher) to talk about research and answer any questions they may have	Up to 1 hour meeting in school (during the school day)

2.	Meet with Kelly (with other pupil researcher) who will train your young person in how to lead a focus group. They will also help design some focus group questions	1-2 hour training session in school (during the school day)
3.	Lead focus group with other pupil researcher (Kelly will also be there if they need any help) The focus group will be recorded and written up by Kelly	1 hour to lead focus group in school (during the school day)
4.	Meet with Kelly (with other pupil researcher) to check the findings	1 hour meeting in school (during the school day)

What are the advantages of taking part for your young person?
This study will empower your young person by listening to their views. The findings will also be fed back to school so they can improve the experience for their students when they ask an adult for support. As a pupil researcher, this is a really exciting opportunity for your young person to become involved in a piece of real life research. It will also be an opportunity for them to learn new skills and develop their confidence.

What will happen if your young person doesn't take part or changes their mind?
Participation is voluntary. If you decide that you do not want your young person to take part in the study then no further communication will be made. You, or your young person themselves, are also able to withdraw from the study at any point up until one week after the focus group has been conducted.

Anonymisation and limits of confidentiality
The names of participants will be replaced with codes which will be used in the data and findings. There will also be strict confidentiality guidelines during the focus group regarding mentioning no names or giving information that makes others easily identifiable. Although all efforts will be made to ensure that the identities of others are hidden, there are limits to confidentiality which the participants will be made aware of. For example, school staff will be aware of the pupils involved in the research study from their school, as arrangements will need to be made for them to attend meetings with the researcher. Although your young person will be told that the information they share will be kept confidential, if the researcher believes the young person or another young person is at risk of harm then the school safeguarding procedures will be followed.

What will my young person's information be used for?
The data collected will be recorded, transcribed and anonymised for the purpose of the researcher's thesis. Anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol so that other researchers have access to the data for future use.

The findings of the study will be shared with the settings and the Somerset Educational Psychology Service. The thesis will be available in the University of Bristol Library and the

researcher may choose to publish a paper or present the findings to other interested parties. The Data Protection Act will be adhered to throughout.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Researcher:
Kelly Osborne, University of Bristol
[redacted]

This study has gained ethical approval from the **School for Policy Studies Ethics Committee**, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX. For any concerns regarding the process of this research study, or if you have any complaints, then please contact my research supervisor on the details below.

Supervisor:
Beth Tarleton, University of Bristol
Tel: 01173310976
Email: beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Kelly Osborne
Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted]

Appendix 8

Pupil Participant information sheet

Information sheet: Pupil Participant

This information sheet gives all of the details you need to know to decide whether or not to take part in my study. Please read it carefully, talk to your parents about it and ask an adult if you have any questions.

What is this research all about?

I am interested in finding out what pupils think is helpful and unhelpful when they go to an adult in school for help when they are struggling with their emotions.

I think that it is important to hear your views as the pupils about this so that we can help make things even better for you when you need a bit of extra help with your emotional well-being.

Who will be carrying out the research?

My name is Kelly Osborne and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. I am studying at the University of Bristol but also work for Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Am I the right pupil for the research?

I am looking for 4 pupil participants to take part in a small group discussion which will be led by 2 pupil researchers from your school. To take part you will need to have gone to a member of school staff for help when you have struggled with managing your

emotions at least once in the past term. You may have help more often to help you with managing your emotions.

You will need to feel confident enough to talk in a small group discussion with some other pupils from your school about your experiences and views.

What will happen if I take part?

	Activity	Commitment from pupil participant
1.	Take part in a focus group (small group discussion) with 4 other pupil participants. This will be led by 2 pupil researchers from your school who will ask you questions about your experiences of turning to an adult in school for help with managing your emotions. The focus group will be tape recorded and written up by Kelly.	1 hour in school (during the school day)

What are the benefits of taking part?

Being involved in this study as a pupil participant is an exciting opportunity for you to have your views heard.

What will happen if I don't take part?

You do not have to take part in this study unless you really want to and your parents agree to it. If you change your mind about taking part in the focus group then you can. You can withdraw from the study up until one week after the focus group.

Will my name be used? Who will find out what I say?

I will talk to you about confidentiality which means, not sharing things that others say and not mentioning other people's names during the group discussion or afterwards. It is really important that you do not share other people's information.

Your name will not be used when I type up the focus group recording or when I write up the research. I will use a code name for you instead. However, some information you share may be able to be identified by others for example, if you have told a member of staff the same story you choose to share in the focus group, then they may know this was you. Finally, although I aim to keep the information you share confidential, if I think that you or another young person isn't safe, then I will have to share this information with some other adults in your school.

What will my information be used for?

Once the focus group is finished then I will listen to the recording and type it all up. I will look at the information I have gathered and think about what it means. The 2 pupil researchers will be asked to check this information before I write up the study. The University of Bristol will then keep this information safe on a password protected server. This information can then be used in the future by other researchers.

Once the research is written up I will share this with the schools involved, the Somerset Educational Psychology Service and some other people that are interested in what we found out.

If you want to know more or have a question then you (with your parent's permission) or your parent can contact me.

This study has gained ethical approval from the **School for Policy Studies Ethics Committee**, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX.

For concerns or complaints about this research you can also contact my supervisor Beth.

Supervisor:

Beth Tarleton, University of Bristol

Tel: 01173310976

Email: beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

Kelly Osborne

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Bristol

[redacted]

Appendix 9

Parent (pupil participant) information sheet

Information sheet: Parent (pupil participants)
What does the research involve?

Your young person has shown interest in taking part in my research as a pupil participant. This information sheet will explain the study and detail their involvement if you and they choose to take part. Please discuss this with your child and if you are happy for your young person to take part then please complete and return the consent form. Alternatively, if you do not wish for your young person to take part then no further contact will be made. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of staff when they seek support with their emotional well-being. It aims to highlight the perceived barriers and facilitators for pupils accessing support from school staff in order to encourage more young people seek support in the future.

Who will be carrying out the research?
This research is being carried out by Kelly Osborne who is a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol and currently working for Somerset Educational Psychology Service.

Why has my young person been chosen?
Over the course of the research, the researcher will be working with 4 schools. Within those schools, the researcher has asked for 4 pupils to come forward who would like to take part as pupil participants.

Your young person has expressed an interest in being a pupil participant. Their participation is completely optional. The main requirement is that your young person has sought help or support for managing their emotions from an adult in school over the last term. They will also need to feel confident enough to take part in a small focus group (group discussion) with the support of the researcher.

What will happen if I consent for my young person to take part?
If you agree for your young person to take part in the study then they will be asked to take part in the following activities:

	Activity	Commitment from pupil participant
1.	Your young person will take part in a focus group with 3 other pupil participants. This will be led by 2 pupil researchers from your young person's school who will ask them questions about their experiences of turning	1 hour in school (during the school day)

	to an adult in school for help with managing their emotions. The focus group will be tape recorded and written up by the researcher.	

What are the advantages of taking part for your young person?
This study will empower your young person by listening to their views. The findings will also be fed back to school so they can improve the experience for their students when they ask an adult for support. As a pupil researcher, this is a really exciting opportunity for your young person to become involved in a piece of real life research.

What will happen if your young person doesn't take part or changes their mind?
Participation is voluntary. If you decide that you do not want your young person to take part in the study then no further communication will be made. You, or your young person themselves, are also able to withdraw from the study at any point up until one week after the focus group has been conducted.

Anonymisation and limits of confidentiality
The names of participants will be replaced with codes which will be used in the data and findings. There will also be strict confidentiality guidelines during the focus group regarding mentioning no names or giving information that makes others easily identifiable. Although all efforts will be made to ensure that the identities of others are hidden, there are limits to confidentiality which the participants will be made aware of. For example, school staff will be aware of the pupils involved in the research study from their school, as arrangements will need to be made for them to attend the focus group. Although your young person will be told that the information they share will be kept confidential, if the researcher believes the young person or another young person is at risk of harm then the school safeguarding procedures will be followed.

What will my young person's information be used for?
The data collected will be tape recorded, transcribed and anonymised for the purpose of the researcher's thesis. Anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol so that other researchers have access to the data for future use.

The findings of the study will be shared with the settings and the Somerset Educational Psychology Service. The thesis will be available in the University of Bristol Library and the researcher may choose to publish a paper or present the findings to other interested parties. The Data Protection Act will be adhered to throughout.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Researcher:
Kelly Osborne, University of Bristol

[redacted]

This study has gained ethical approval from the **School for Policy Studies Ethics Committee**, 3 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TX. For any concerns regarding the process of this research study, or if you have any complaints, then please contact my research supervisor on the details below.

Supervisor:
Beth Tarleton, University of Bristol
Tel: 01173310976
Email: beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

Kelly Osborne
Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted]

Appendix 10

Head Teacher consent form

The perceived helpful and unhelpful characteristics of school staff when pupils seek support for emotional well-being

Head Teacher Consent Form
Please put your **initials** next to each of the statements below if you agree to them.

No.	I give permission/agree to…..	Initial
1.	*I agree to my school taking part in the research which aims to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of staff they turn to for support with their emotional well-being.*	
2.	*I have read and agree to the terms stated within the information sheet.*	
3.	*I understand the information I have been provided with and the expectations of the school throughout the research.*	
4.	*I have been given the contact details of the researcher and their supervisor should I need to clarify anything or have any concerns regarding the research.*	
5.	*I understand that the researcher will make all efforts to ensure confidentiality and anonymity will be of utmost priority throughout the study but that there are limits to this.*	
6.	*I understand that I can withdraw my setting from the study without explanation up until 1 month after the interview and focus group has taken place.*	

Please sign below and return this form to the researcher who will be happy to collect it.

Setting Name: ……..

Head Teacher Name (Printed): ……..

Head Teacher Signature: ……

Date: ……

Appendix 11

SENCO consent form

The perceived helpful and unhelpful characteristics of school staff when pupils seek support for their emotional well-being.

SENCO: Consent Form
Please put your **initials** next to each of the statements below if you agree to them.

No.	I give permission/agree to…..	Initial
1.	*I agree to take part in the research which aims to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of the staff they turn to for support with their emotional well-being.*	
2.	*I understand that the researcher will make all efforts to ensure confidentiality and anonymity will be of utmost priority throughout the study but that there are limits to this.*	
3.	*I understand and agree to the interview being digitally recorded and written up.*	
4.	*I agree to the data being used for the researcher's thesis and the anonymised findings being shared with the schools involved, the Local Authority and other interested parties.*	
5.	*I understand that the anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol which is made available for future use.*	
6.	*I understand that I can withdraw from the study without explanation up until 1 month after the interview has taken place.*	

Please sign below and return this form to the researcher who will be happy to collect it.

School Name: ……..

Position in school: ……..

Name (printed): …….

Signature: ……..

Date: ……

Appendix 12

Pupil Researcher consent form

The perceived helpful and unhelpful characteristics of school staff when pupils seek support for their emotional well-being.

Pupil Researchers: Consent Form

This consent form helps me know that you know all about my research and are happy to take part.

Please read the statements below and if you agree, write your **initials** in the box beside them.

No.	I give permission/agree to…..	Initials
1.	*I agree to take part in the research as a pupil researcher.* 	
2.	*I have read and understood the information sheet.* 	
3.	*If I have any questions, I have been given the contact details of the researcher.*  	
4.	*I understand that the researcher will not use my name when she writes it up and I agree not to share what other people say in the group discussion.* 	

5.	*I have been made aware that the group discussion will be digitally recorded and written up.*  	
6.	*I agree to the research being shared with other people.* 	
7.	*I understand that the when the recording is written up, it will be kept safely on a computer at the University of Bristol and may be used again for other studies.* 	
8.	*I understand that I do not have to take part or can change my mind about taking part up until 1 month after the group discussion.* 	

If you are still happy to take part in the research, then please fill in the details below and return this form to Mr/Mrs……

Name of school: ……

Name of Pupil Participant: ……

Pupil signature: ……

Date: ……

Appendix 13

Parent (pupil researcher) consent form

The perceived helpful and unhelpful characteristics of school staff when pupils seek support for their emotional well-being

Parent of Pupil Researchers: Consent Form
Please put your **initials** next to each of the statements below if you agree to them.

No.	I give permission/agree to…..	Initial
1.	*I agree to my young person taking part in the research which aims to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of the staff they turn to for support with their emotional support.*	
2.	*I understand that the researcher will make all efforts to ensure confidentiality and anonymity will be of utmost priority throughout the study but that there are limits to this as some members of staff will be aware of which young people are taking part in the study.*	
3.	*I understand and agree to the focus group being digitally recorded and written up.*	
4.	*I agree to the data being used for the researcher's thesis and the anonymised findings being shared with the schools involved, the Local Authority and other interested parties.*	
5.	*I understand that the anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol which is made available for future use.*	
6.	*I understand that I can withdraw my young person, or they can withdraw themselves, from the study without explanation up until 1 month after the focus group has taken place.*	

Please sign below and return this form to your young person's school where the researcher will collect it.

School Name: ……..

Name of young person: ……..

Parent name (printed): …….

Parent signature: ……..

Date: ……

Appendix 14

Pupil Participant consent form

The perceived helpful and unhelpful characteristics of school staff when pupils seek support for their emotional well-being.

Pupil Participants: Consent Form

This consent form helps me know that you know all about my research and are happy to take part.

Please read the statements below and if you agree, write your **initials** in the box beside them.

No.	I give permission/agree to…..	Initials
1.	*I agree to take part in the research as a pupil participant.* 	
2.	*I have read and understood the information sheet.* 	
3.	*If I have any questions, I have been given the contact details of the researcher.*  	
4.	*I understand that the researcher will not use my name when she writes it up and I agree not to share what other people say in the group discussion.* 	

5.	*I have been made aware that the group discussion will be digitally recorded and written up.*  	
6.	*I agree to the research being shared with other people.* 	
7.	*I understand that the when the recording is written up, it will be kept safely on a computer at the University of Bristol and may be used again for other studies.* 	
8.	*I understand that I do not have to take part or can change my mind about taking part up until 1 month after the group discussion.* 	

If you are still happy to take part in the research, then please fill in the details below and return this form to Mr/Mrs……

Name of school: ……

Name of Pupil Participant: ……

Pupil signature: ……

Date: ……

Appendix 15

Parent (pupil participant) consent form

The perceived helpful and unhelpful characteristics of school staff when pupils seek support for emotional well-being

Parent of Pupil Participant: Consent Form
Please put your **initials** next to each of the statements below if you agree to them.

No.	I give permission/agree to…..	Initial
1.	*I agree to my young person taking part in the research which aims to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of the staff they turn to for support with their emotional well-being.*	
2.	*I understand that the researcher will make all efforts to ensure confidentiality and anonymity will be of utmost priority throughout the study but that there are limits to this as some members of staff will be aware of which young people are taking part in the study.*	
3.	*I understand and agree to the focus group being digitally recorded and written up.*	
4.	*I agree to the data being used for the researcher's thesis and the anonymised findings being shared with the schools involved, the Local Authority and other interested parties.*	
5.	*I understand that the anonymised data will be stored on a password protected server by the University of Bristol which is made available for future use. The data will be used for future papers, feedback to schools and other interested parties.*	
6.	*I understand that I can withdraw my young person, or they can withdraw themselves, from the study without explanation up until 1 month after the focus group has taken place.*	

Please sign below and return this form to your young person's school where the researcher will collect it.

School Name: ……..

Name of young person: ……..

Parent name (printed): …….

Parent signature: ……..

Date: ……

Appendix 16

Support for Pupils

Pupil Support

Thank you for taking part in my research. If you have any questions or concerns about your involvement in the research then please speak to your parents or another adult about it.

You can:

Speak to your teachers at school. Especially Mr/Mrs……

Speak to Kelly (the researcher)

[redacted]

If you feel like you can not speak to any of the people above then you can contact ChildLine for help or support.

Telephone: 0800 1111

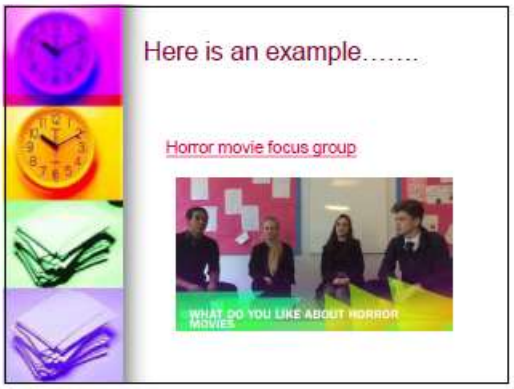
Website: www.childline.org.uk/get-support/ where you can chat to a counsellor online, get useful information and advice.

Appendix 17

Training PowerPoint for Pupil Researchers

1

2



3

4

5

6


What do we want to find out?
Students experiences when seeking help from an adult in school for their emotional well-being
What things have adults done that help
What things have adults done that don't help
What would students like adults to do
What would encourage them to speak to an adult

7


Focus group questions
We need to think of an initial question to start the discussion off – can you think of one?
We need to think of a list of questions and prompts to help keep the discussion going – lets make a list of ideas!

8

Appendix 18

SENCO semi-structured interview topic guide

Semi-structured interview with SENCO – Topic guide

Interview date: …….

School/SENCO: …….

Introductions

- Introduce self (again)
- Reminder of study aims/purpose (FG with CYP to find out what they perceive to be helpful and unhelpful when they seek support for their emotional well-being from staff in school. SENCO interview/looking at policies aims to help triangulate the data)
- Reminder about digital recording – check ok
- Reminder about confidentiality (no names)
- How findings will be reported (final codes identified from all 3-4 schools)
- Interview length – up to 1 hour
- Any questions or concerns?

1. Support for CYP currently in place

- What support is currently in place to support students' emotional well-being in school?
- Who? Why?
- Where?
- When?
- Type of support?
- Signposting?

2. Promoting emotional well-being

- Does your school see emotional well-being as high priority?
- Why does your school see emotional well-being as a priority?
- Impact on pupil academic progress?
- Impact on mental health?
- Who sees it as a priority? – SLT? All staff? Pupils?
- Do all staff see it as a priority?

- How does your school promote emotional well-being?
- Assemblies?
- PSHE lessons?
- Advertising?
- Tutors?
- Policies
- Who does this? Tutors? School counsellors?

- On reflection, do you think your school could do more to promote positive emotional well-being in school?
- Have you got any ideas in the pipeline?
- What aspects of promoting emotional well-being would you like to develop?

3. The role of staff in supporting emotional well-being

- Do all staff see supporting/promoting pupil emotional well-being as part of their role/responsibilities?
- Who? Which staff do and which don't?
- Why? What are the barriers?

- How could your school develop this?
- Staff training?
- What facilitates staff wanting to better support/promote student emotional well-being?
- Policy?
- What about staff well-being? Is this considered in your school? How?

4. Student emotional well-being

- Do you think your students feel that their emotional well-being is supported/promoted in school?
- How?
- By who?
- When?
- Do they know what is meant by 'emotional well-being'?

- What do you think is important to your students in terms of their emotional well-being being supported/promoted in school?
- Being listened to?
- Time to talk?
- Relationships?
- Skills/strategies

5. Anything else you'd like to add? Any questions?

Prompts

- Can you tell me a bit more about……
- What did you mean when you said……
- You said this…., can you tell me why you think that?
- Why do you think that….

Thank and close interview

Appendix 19

Analysis of school policies tables

School 1

Analysis of school policies

(Questions/prompts from Constructing Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014)

School	Policies	1. What its originators intended to accomplish	2. Process of producing	3. What/ who does it affect?	4, How various audiences interpret it?	5. How, when and to what extent these audiences use this document	6. Purpose – what does it explain/justify/foretell actions	7. What does it not say?	8. Compare/ contrast with wider documents (e.g. SEND CoP)
School 1	Anti-bullying policy (Sep, 2015)	Encourage positive relationships and protect students from bullying	SENCO is responsible and it is monitored by the Governers' Student Matters Sub-Committee	Points out staff/student responsibilities in order to protect students	Me – very sanction based	Responsibilities of staff/students included Staff, students and parents informed of policy	Defines bullying, includes school procedures to deal with bullying	Pupil views/contribution Link to mental health/effects of bullying with signposting	Doesn't include pupil participation or views
	Behaviour for learning policy (Sep, 2017)	Creating an environment conducive for learning with good behaviour	SENCO/Assistant principle is responsible and it is monitored by the Governers' Student Matters Sub-Committee (and discussed with pupils)	Responsibilities of staff/students and parents – whole school community	Me – highlights procedures to manage negative behaviour – less on positive behaviours and support (but is mentioned)	Responsibilities of whole school community	School systems and procedures around behaviour	Pupil views Link between challenging behaviour and mental health or other difficulties. Details of pastoral support systems.	Doesn't talk about SEMH as a need.
	Child protection Policy (Feb, 2018)	Promote the welfare of CYP and keep them safe.	Reviewed by school Governors annually	All members of the school community as	Me - Very thorough	Shared in induction programmes.	Lots of definitions, details procedures, lists legislation it is in line with		
	Equality and diversity policy (Mar, 2016)	In line with Equality Act, promotes good relationships and equality Promotes belonging	Governors ensure policy is in line with legislation. The Business Committee monitor the document and it is reviewed every 3 years.	Details responsibilities of staff	Me – very short and full of statements rather than procedures.	The school principal informs all staff of their responsibilities, provides necessary training/support and deals with unlawful discrimination	Details key principles to equality the school work to. Gives staff responsibilities	Doesn't state or detail procedures or how they will do things.	Doesn't include pupil participation or views

	Relationship and sex education policy (Sep, 2018)	Promotes healthy relationships	Monitored by the Governors' Student Matters Sub Committee	Details responsibilities of staff	Me – explains curriculum in this area	Not specified	Highlights importance of teaching this and what the curriculum covers. Gives staff responsibilities		Pupil participation or views? Students may want specific information in this area
	SEN and disabilities policy (Sep, 2017)	An inclusive school – promotes welfare and progress of all students	Reviewed annually	All staff, pupils and parents	Me – appears inclusive	Not specified	Explains legislation around SEND policies and how they adhere to it		Link to SEND CoP
	Substance misuse policy (Nov, 2015)	Protecting students from substance misuse	Implementation and monitoring by the inclusion leader and the Governors' Student Matters Committee.	Identifies roles and responsibilities of staff.	Me – in line with legislation and details school procedures for managing substance misuse	Not specified	Justifies sanctions for substance misuse in school. Explains school procedures.	Doesn't detail support or links to support for students with other difficulties leading to misuse	Links to legislation.

Researcher reflections on school 1 policies

These policies were analysed as they were thought to link closely with the support offered to students in the school. Although many of these policies did mention the support they provide to students, I didn't feel that this was described particularly clearly considering the pastoral support they have in place for their students. None of the policies included pupil participation or stated their views. There appears to be a gap in the school policies for a new document created by the students around the pastoral support available in school and how the school could further promote student's emotional well-being.

School 2

Analysis of school policies

(Questions/prompts from Constructing Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014)

School	Policies	1. What its originators intended to accomplish	2. Process of producing	3. What/ who does it affect?	4, How various audiences interpret it?	5. How, when and to what extent these audiences use this document	6. Purpose – what does it explain/justify/foretell actions	7. What does it not say?	8. Compare/ contrast with wider documents (e.g. SEND CoP)
School 2	Accessibility policy (Sep, 2017)	Main purpose is to ensure the school are as inclusive as possible	Not specified. Reviewed every 3 years involving students, parents, staff and governors	Students, staff and parents. The SENCO is specifically referenced	Me – very much in line with the SEND CoP (2015) to ensure the school are seen as inclusive	The SENCO is referred to in terms of how they facilitate accessibility	Explains their statutory requirement in line with the Equality Act (2010)	What pastoral support is offered to those with a disability (therefore acknowledging that they might need additional support	Links with SEND CoP (but this isn't referenced). References the Equality Act (2010)
	Anti-bullying policy (Spring, 2017)	A whole school approach to anti-bullying	Whole school survey and consultation with students, parents, staff and governors – reviewed every 2 years	Whole school community	Me – Details the preventative work they carry out as well as the support available	Details procedures for when bullying is reported (in appendices)	Explains what bullying is and the types of bullying as well as how they will manage bullying	Student views aren't explicitly stated	Promotes inclusion and equality in line with SEND CoP (2015) and the Equality Act (2010) (not referenced)
	Safeguarding and child protection policy (Spring, 2017)	To safeguard pupils and promote their welfare	Doesn't specify	It mainly affects pupils and states the responsibilities of everyone who works in or visits the school	Me – very thorough, details statutory responsibilities and procedures. Includes how they encourage YP to share concerns	Shared during staff induction training. Details procedures for staff to refer to	Explains roles and responsibilities linked to statutory requirement for safeguarding	How the document was produced and who was consulted	Links to wider documents and other policies e.g. working together to safeguard children (2006)
	Behaviour policy (2017-2018)	Uphold and promote the principles associated with a positive learning environment for all	Not specified. Reviewed annually by Headteacher and governing body	Students, parents and staff	Me – very sanction based.	Parents and students are expected to sign a home-school agreement which includes key aspects of this policy	Justifies the sanctions they use to manage challenging behaviour in school.	Pupil views. Very little about the support offered to those displaying challenging behaviour	Some links to the Equality Act (2010) and other government guidance throughout
	Attendance policy (2017-2018)	Detail attendance monitoring procedures/ Legal requirements	Not specified	Students, parents, carers, staff and governors all have a responsibility	Me – Lots of legal terms and data throughout.	Attendance procedures are made clear to those involved in monitoring attendance	Explains procedures and justifies why it is closely monitored by including legal	Little about how those with low attendance might be supported to raise their attendance	More matter of fact than supportive. More in line with legal documentation

							requirements		
	SEN and disability information report and policy (Jun, 2018)	Meet the key principles underpinning the SEND CoP (2015)	Not specified	The whole school community – particularly those students with SEND	Me – legislation heavy. Links explicitly to the SEND CoP (2015).	Recently updated document. Reviewed to keep in line with statutory requirement	Explains SEND procedures in school in line with SEND CoP (2015)	Pupil views are not included despite stating that they involve students in decision-making throughout school	Produced in line with recent SEND CoP and refers to it numerous times

Researcher reflections on school 2 policies

These policies were analysed as they are closely linked with the support offered to students in school. Throughout my analysis, I was looking for opportunities where the YP's voices were heard and carefully studied the pastoral support offered to students. It was interesting to find that students were rarely consulted on the production of school policies. Additionally, the range of pastoral support available to students in school was not given due regard in any of the policies. Many of the documents appeared to be written for legal purposes rather than used as a working document in the school. A pastoral support policy which is produced by, or with, the students may be a helpful addition to the school's policies. This could be used as a working document in order to continuously improve the pastoral support in school and to promote student emotional well-being.

School 3

Analysis of school policies
(Questions/prompts from Constructing Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014)

School	Policies	1. What its originators intended to accomplish	2. Process of producing	3. What/ who does it affect?	4, How various audiences interpret it?	5. How, when and to what extent these audiences use this document	6. Purpose – what does it explain/justify/foretell actions	7. What does it not say?	8. Compare/ contrast with wider documents (e.g. SEND CoP)
School 3	Anti-bullying policy (July, 2017)	Produced by the learning trust the school is part of. Specifies principles and bullying procedures	Doesn't specify other than it is produced by the learning trust	Whole-school community including students, staff and parents	Me – considers both the bully and the recipient of bullying. Appears supportive of students, mentions prevention ie. PSHE programmes	Following procedures when a bullying incident occurs	Explains procedures and justifies the actions taken, such as, both parties receiving counselling	Student views around bullying Does mention that this is discussed in student council	No links to legislation.
	Attendance policy (July, 2017)	Good attendance levels for academic reasons as well as self-esteem.	Produced by the academy but no further information is given	Whole-school community – details roles of everyone	Me – very detailed and supported, very clear procedures in place	Information on procedures and used to distinguish between authorised and un-	Considers safeguarding, explains procedures Roles and responsibilities of staff Considers	Very thorough – student views have not been gathered	Links with LA policy on school attendance

						authorised absences	underlying reasons for poor attendance and support in place		
	Behaviour Policy (Feb, 2018)	Consistent approach to behaviour management Promoting good behaviour as well as managing poor behaviour	Produced by learning trust – Appendix includes specific procedures of the school	Whole-school community including behaviours outside of school including social media	Me – restorative procedures acknowledge the views of the YP Section on how positive behaviour is promoted	Staff are expected to be familiar with the policies and procedures as they all have responsibility for behaviour management	Explains day to day procedures Justifies and details possible sanctions	YP's views not included but they are listened to throughout the behaviour management procedures	Links to Equality Act (2010) and their legal duties related to this
	Equalities Act Statement (Mar, 2013)	Shows how the school keep in line with their legal requirements around equality School action plan to promote equal opportunities	Produced by the school – no details given Principle and Governors have responsibility for implement-tation	All staff but appears to be particularly relevant to the Principle and Governing body	Me – very legal and matter of fact as opposed to a working document with clear procedures	Principal and governing body to implement so they are likely to be more familiar with it – not really specified Action plan likely to be updated (but	Explains key guiding principles to keep in line with legislation Gives breakdown of student equal opportunities data	No YP's views Doesn't detail procedures if the policy is breached	Specifically linked to the Equalities Act 2010, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the UN conventions on the Rights of the Child

						hasn't since 2013)			
	Exclusion policy (July, 2017)	Policy and practice around exclusion, ensure safety and well-being of all and reduce the use of exclusion as a sanction	Developed by the learning trust rather than the school	Key staff and governors, students being excluded and their parents	Me – identifies contributing factors that may have led to the exclusion ie, SEMH needs or bereavement Clarifies school's legal responsibiliti es	Particularly relevant to the Principle, vice Principal and governing body who are all involved in exclusion procedures	How they aim to reduce exclusions States that it should be read alongside other key policies Explains exclusion procedures	No YP's views within the policy but their views are heard throughout the exclusion procedures Doesn't state what support might be put into place after an exclusion (but does state that it will be put into place)	In line with The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012. Linked to LA exclusion procedures
	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Jan, 2018)	Details procedures and responsibiliti es of staff, how students are supported and kept safe	Produced by learning trust and reviewed annually States who the policy is monitored and evaluated by	Whole-school community	Me – details how they support students and staff (but to a much lesser extent)	Policy reviewed regularly and safeguarding leads named – working policy document	Explains how they safeguard students. Appendix includes key safeguarding information and signs of abuse	Monitored and evaluated via consultation with student voice	Linked with a range of legislation
	Sex and	Part of PSHEC	Prepared	Students,	Me – clear	Appears to	Safeguards	No YP's views	In line with

	Relationship Education Policy (Feb, 2012)	(Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship), aims to promote sexual and emotional health	with Local Service Team	parents/carers and staff who deliver sex and relationship education	about what the curriculum covers and how it is delivered in school and differentiated	be written for parents to understand how it is delivered – used for information purposes	YP, details curriculum content and how it is delivered, how sensitive issues are addressed and signposted to students	which is a shame within a policy where they will have strong views	Government guidance and legislation
	Special Education Needs Policy (Jan, 2018)	Aims to meet the needs of all students in line with SEND CoP (2015) in inclusive way	Produced by the school – reviewed every 2 years by governing body	Whole-school community	Me – Clear policy, states roles and responsibilities of whole school community	Reminds whole-school community (especially staff) of their responsibilities to ensure they are working in line with SEND legislation	Primarily details the responsibilities of staff in line with the SEND CoP (2015) around meeting the needs of students – names SENCO	YP's views – although it states that they take the views of students into account	Links with SEND Code of Practice (2015) and other school policies

<u>Researcher reflections on school 3 policies</u>

Although the views of YP were not gained for any of these policies, many of the policies state that gaining the student voice and individual views are standard practice. Additionally, these policies were on the whole more solution-focused than the other schools in the study and identified what pastoral support is in place for students and what contributing factors might lead to challenging behaviours or mental health needs. A new policy around pastoral care for social, emotional and mental health needs that is linked to many of the policies analysed above would further enhance the way they currently document their procedures in school. This should include the views of young people, or be produced by the students themselves.

Appendix 20

Researcher reflections

School 1 reflexive account

Researcher reflexive account

1) **How did I feel….**

   a. **before the focus group**

I was concerned about whether the focus group training was enough and whether the pupil researchers were going to feel confident enough to run a focus group. I was also concerned about whether the focus group would yield any useful information.

   b. **During the focus group**

During the focus group I felt very proud of the pupil researchers as they had really taken on board what we did during the training session and ran the group really well. I was excited about some of the discussion that the questions drew out and began making some memos about some possible codes and themes I could draw from observing these discussions. There were a few occasions where I wanted the pupil researchers to dig a bit deeper into some of the comments made and ask a bit more. This is something I could add into the training in my next school.

   c. **After the focus group**

After the focus group, I was excited about analysing the data and thinking about which way the research could go next in terms of theoretical sampling. During transcription and initial coding, I was surprised how many times the same themes were discussed by the participants.

2) **How do you think the participants felt?**

The participants appeared to enjoy the experience and became more relaxed throughout the focus group. They were willing to share both positive and negative experiences with the group and discuss the ways in which they feel adults could improve the support they offer to students.

3) **Alternative strategies – would you have done anything differently?**

I would have encouraged the pupil researchers to probe a bit more with some of the answers given by participants however, this has enabled me to explore these areas of interest in my next set of data collection.

4) **What have you learnt on a professional level?**

This experience further highlighted to me the level of insight these young people have when it comes to supporting their emotional well-being. I was also impressed with the pupil researcher's ability to take a lead within the research process and how this exercise was valued by them. Finally, I had developed a good relationship with the SENCO in this school

which significantly improved the research process and ensured it went as smoothly as possible.

Pupil researchers reflexive account

5) **How did you feel….**

d. before the focus group

Excited and nervous.

e. During the focus group

It felt good to be able to let it out, no one was judging you, everyone there understood and it was really quiet so you could reflect.

f. After the focus group

We felt better and proud.

6) **How do you think the other participants felt?**

I think they felt quite happy, they all seemed to listen and understand as they were agreeing and nodding their heads.

7) **Alternative strategies – would you have done anything differently or asked any other questions?**

Maybe ask whether anyone disagreed with anything or asked if there was anything else anyone wanted to talk about.

8) **What have you learnt – what was good/helpful about taking part in the focus group?**

I missed bad lessons which was good. I let it all out and it felt good to let it go.

School 2 reflexive account

Researcher reflexive account

9) **How did I feel….**

g. before the focus group

I felt excited about the potential data I could yield having already collected some really interesting data from school 1. I had some concerns about one of the pupil researchers in terms of her confidence to facilitate the focus group in front of the other participants, some of which were boys she knew and she told me that it would be embarrassing.

h. During the focus group

The pupil researchers found it more difficult to facilitate the focus group than the pupil researchers in school 1. The other participants were honest but sometimes appeared less

willing to talk about their own experiences. I felt that the participants were really aware of my presence during this focus group and looked to me for help and direction. The power relations present may also have led to participants giving certain answers or giving less examples from their own personal experiences.

i. After the focus group

Initially, I was concerned that the data collected from this focus group was quite sparse and wasn't able to build on my previous data collected. However, throughout transcription and analysis it became clear that many of the themes occurring appeared to be very similar to that of the first focus group. It also clarified the ambiguous nature of their comments.

10) How do you think the participants felt?

I think that the pupil researchers felt empowered throughout the process and, although they were anxious about leading the focus group, during the focus group they were really sensible and tried to engage all of the participants. The other participants appeared relaxed within the group but were reluctant to share their personal experiences and tended to talk more generally. I wasn't sure whether this was to do with the power dynamics between the participants in the group or whether it was because they didn't quite understand that the questions wanted them to share their personal experiences.

11) Alternative strategies – would you have done anything differently?

In hindsight, it may have been helpful to check with the school SENCO to consider the within group dynamics a bit more. Although this was a consideration I had and discussed with the SENCO, I became very aware of the impact this may have had whilst observing the group.

12) What have you learnt on a professional level?

Throughout my data collection journey so far, I am beginning to realise how difficult it is for young people to articulate what it is that they really want from an adult in school (or outside of school) when they seek help for their emotional well-being. They appeared to be very confused about this and want different things on different occasions depending upon a whole range of factors. This is highly likely to be to do with their stage of development. It has also increased my knowledge and understanding of group dynamics and the power relations present within groups of young people which can impact on how individuals act and what individuals say.

Pupil researchers reflexive account

1) How did you feel….

a. before the focus group

Nervous, worried, excited about running a group. Didn't know what to say in the group and it was hard setting it all up. Worried about asking questions to some of the older pupils in the group.

b. During the focus group

Once it started it was fine, just like a chat. It was alright when it was happening but it was hard asking the questions as we didn't want to make a mistake.

c. After the focus group

Thought it was okay, felt proud of it. It was a big thing, a once in a lifetime opportunity and we might not get the chance to do it again.

2) How do you think the other participants felt?

Nervous at first and hard as they had to admit quite a lot.

3) Alternative strategies – would you have done anything differently or asked any other questions?

Not said 'like' as much. Made the questions clearer and easier to understand.

4) What have you learnt – what was good/helpful about taking part in the focus group?

Built confidence, skills, being able to ask questions, it was nice to be able to talk about adults and not get into trouble about it. Being honest about your opinion.

School 3 reflexive account

Researcher reflexive account

13) How did I feel….

j. before the focus group

Before the focus group I had some concerns about one of the pupil researchers as she said that she was nervous about taking part in the research and was quiet when we first met. During the focus group training she really relaxed and was able to come up with some really helpful questions to ask in the focus group.

k. During the focus group

During the focus group I was really impressed with how well the participants got along with one another and really cared and listened to one another. They were really solution focused and were giving each other some really useful advice for when they feel they can't seek help from an adult in school.

I was really impressed with one of the pupil researchers prompts to encourage participants to give more information about their answer and his ability to keep the group on topic. They were also really respectful of the ground rules.

l. After the focus group

I had concerns about a couple of the things mentioned by two of the participants in terms of their feelings about themselves and admitting things they hadn't told adults. I spent some

additional time debriefing participants and checking that they were all okay before leaving. Interestingly, the participant who appeared particularly emotional during the group was really happy after the group and said he really enjoyed it. I think the group really acted as a therapeutic activities and participants left feeling as though they were able to safely get things off of their chest. I also spoke to the school SENCO about one of the participants concerns who was fully aware of the situation.

14) How do you think the participants felt?

As discussed above, I think they enjoyed the opportunity to share their experiences with other who can relate to them and offer each other advice and support. I also think they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss issues within the school, such as bullying, freely without an adult from school being present. They all hoped that they would be able to do another focus group one day.

15) Alternative strategies – would you have done anything differently?

No, I think the meet and greet session really helps the pupil researchers to feel relaxed and less anxious about taking part in research. Overall I think the process ran smoothly and yielded some really interesting findings.

16) What have you learnt on a professional level?

I have seen the effects of giving the young people a voice in research and letting them choose the direction the research goes in. It was really interesting to see the therapeutic benefits of the focus group and the developing confidence in the participants, and particularly the pupil researchers. It has highlighted how little young people are given a voice and empowered in schools, particularly in terms of developing policies and practices which impact on them, for example, anti-bullying issues. It has also demonstrated how young people view their school world in comparison to how the adults in school perceive it. These differences are huge and the young people have some really interesting things to say and some great ideas.

Pupil researchers reflexive account

1) **How did you feel….**

   a. **before the focus group**

Before the focus group I felt a bit nervous because I had never done it before.

   b. **During the focus group**

During the focus group I felt anxious because I didn't know many people there.

   c. **After the focus group**

After the focus group I felt happy because I got to talk to someone about a big issue that's happened all my life and we don't usually get the opportunity to do that.

   d. **Now….**

Now I still feel happy and proud that we did well.

2) **How do you think the other participants felt?**

Some felt anxious and scared but they enjoyed it once they got into it. I think they thought it felt nice to talk to others as they never get anyone to talk to.

3) **Alternative strategies – would you have done anything differently or asked any other questions?**

Wouldn't do anything differently.

4) **What have you learnt – what was good/helpful about taking part in the focus group?**

Learnt to talk to adults and not hold back. Learnt how to run a focus group and would feel confident leading one again. It was helpful to get your feelings and emotions, talk to people and see if they had any good advice for us. There was some good advice in the group.

Appendix 21

Focus group questions (theoretical sampling)

What do we want to find out? (All pupil researchers were told this)

- Students experiences when seeking help from an adult in school for their emotional well-being
- What things have adults done that help
- What things have adults done that don't help
- What would students like adults to do
- What would encourage them to speak to an adult

School 1 Focus group

Questions devised and asked by young people

7. How have the teachers supported you when you've felt emotional in the past?
8. Can you give us any examples of what adults have done that have been helpful in the past?
9. From your experiences you go to your friends because the adults don't help, what did the adults do that were unhelpful?
10. What things do you find supportive and what ways could adults use those and improve the support?
11. Are there any helpful traits, that adults in our school have now?
12. Do you feel confident going to adults for support with your emotions and in what ways could the adults make you feel more comfortable to go to them?

Theoretical categories identified through analysis

- Positive student-teacher relationships
- Gauging the right time to talk
- Containing overwhelming feelings
- The inbetweeners – in between wanting to be active agents in their own lives and being dependent on adults
- Protecting image (through transition to adulthood)
- Mutual misunderstanding

These categories were presented and explained to the pupil researchers in focus group 2.

School 2 Focus group

Questions devised and asked by young people

7. Would you prefer adults in school to sort out a problem for you or they help you to sort out the problem yourself? And why? **(The inbetweeners)**
8. Do you prefer talking to an adult about a problem, or….do you prefer to keep it to yourself? **(Gauging the right time to talk)**
9. Do you worry about how other students see you when you go to an adult for help with your emotions? Tell us about this. **(Protecting image)**

10. Would you choose a particular adult in school to talk to about a problem or emotion? If so, why do you go them, if not, then who do you go to like do you go to a friend or family member or like who do you go to? **(Positive student-teacher relationships)**
11. Do some adults understand and others misunderstand your problems/feelings? Tell us about this. **(Mutual misunderstanding)**
12. What characteristics, for example, caring or being kind help or don't help when you go to an adult for support with your emotions? **(Containing overwhelming feelings)**

Theoretical categories identified through analysis

- Mutual relationships
- Image
- (unrealistic) expectations that adults understand YP's problems
- Problem dependent
- Lost confidence due to lack of support in previous experiences
- The Inbetweeners - in between being a child and an adult

These categories were presented and explained to the pupil researchers in focus group 3.

School 3 Focus group

Questions devised and asked by young people

7. What are your relationships like with adults in school? **(Mutual relationships)**
8. What do you think people think about you when you've been to a teacher for help? **(Image)**
9. When have you found that an adult has thought your problem is really small but to you it's really big? **((Unrealistic) expectations that adults understand YP's problems)**
10. What problems would you go to an adult with and what problems wouldn't you go to an adult with? **(Problem Dependent)**
11. Have you lost confidence in adults in school in the past due to them not listening or helping? **(Lost confidence due to lack of support in previous experiences)**
12. Do you think sometimes you can keep things in and be an adult and other times you have to tell an adult? **(The inbetweeners - In between being a child and an adult)**

Theoretical categories identified through analysis

- "Confusion" – alternatives to seeking help from an adult in school
- Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable
- Student-teacher relationships/dependence
- Help managing and containing overwhelming emotions (preventing bigger issues)
- The conflicts of seeking help
- Overcoming the unknowns of seeking help/learning the skills

Appendix 22

Focus group ground rules

Ground rules devised by pupil researchers

School 1

1. Quiet fiddling only
2. Keep unhelpful comments to yourself
3. Only one person talking at a time
4. Do not say teacher's names
5. Keep everything said in this room confidential
6. Only the person holding the bumble bee speaks

School 2

1. Try not to talk when somebody else is talking
2. Listening to others
3. Respect others' ideas
4. We would like everyone to take part
5. Try to keep the background noise to a minimum
6. Try not to use teacher's names
7. Try to keep what other people say confidential

School 3

1. No talking over one another
2. Stay on topic
3. Listen to others, be nice to them
4. What is said in here, stays in here

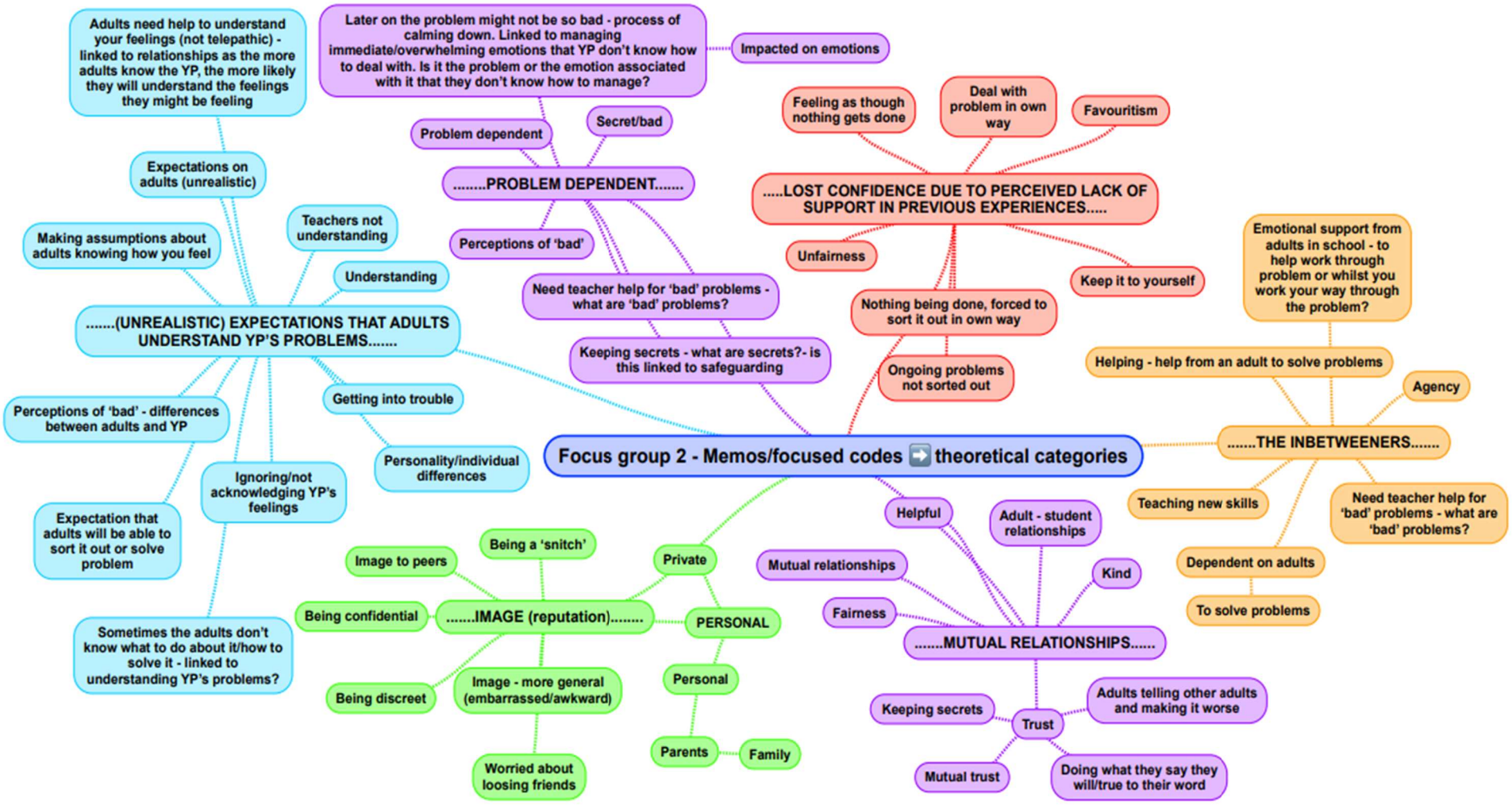
Appendix 23

Focus group 1: focused codes to theoretical categories


Focus group 1 - Memos/focused codes ➡️ theoretical categories
Open coding/codes that stood out whilst collecting data:
- time - space to let it all out
- understanding
- listening
- "they need to earn my trust"
- mutual trust/understanding
- agency
- contradicting (messages from adults)
Participants struggled to get into traits but instead talked more generally about their experiences. Traits and codes have therefore been more interpreted.
Role of the teacher! Students misunderstand teachers as well
Excepted/not judged/can relate - linked to understanding of adolescents' problems
...MUTUAL MISUNDERSTANDING - Understanding vs misunderstanding...
Getting into trouble -linked to image
Some participants contradicted one another a bit - this could show individual differences or could be as a result of different kinds of problems.
Adults learning to understand individuals- linked to relationships
Individual difference - both teachers and students - links to relationships
Students make assumptions about teachers - linked to relationships
...RELATIONSHIPS - Positive teacher-student relationships (linked to attachment)...
Being noticed
Wanting attention
Lots of the traits named link to relationships (mutual trust/caring/emotional support)
Mutual relationships
Attachment - past experiences impact future ones
Some members of the group contributed much more than others.
Not wanting to talk vs wanting to talk
Time/patience/being listened to/approachable
...TALKING - GAUGING THE RIGHT TIME TO TALK...
Adults finding the right time to talk it through with a student - linked to relationships
Confidence - linked to relationships?
Not getting the right help - linked to misunderstanding?
Knowing who to talk to linked to relationships
Participants seemed ridged with focus group structure/rules - may have meant that they didn't say what they wanted to say or how they wanted to said it. This was discussed in the group about not being able to say it as it is.
Agency - ...THE INBETWEENERS...- in between wanting to be active agents in their own lives and being dependent on adults
Image - ...PROTECTING IMAGE THROUGH TRANSITION.../being allowed to express feelings safely
The need to express themselves in the way they need to which they don't always feel they can do in front of adults- fear of being told off, image/reputation.
Links to relationships - not wanting to be seen to be asking/needing help but wanting adults to discreetly come to them to offer help
Links to agency - wants to be seen as independent and able to sort difficulties out themselves but also want adults to 'secretly' help them.
Some problems are out of the students control
Wanting adults to 'fix' certain problems
Age of young people mean they are between childhood and adolescence and therefore want adults for some things but not others. Problem dependent.
Wanting to be encouraged to sort problems yourself
Links with relationships- wanting to be looked after
In comparison to friends - adults keep things confidential/can gain others' perspectives/give advice/answer questions) - linked to agency - some problems need adult support
...Feelings - ...CONTAINING OVERWHELMING FEELINGS...
Overwhelming negative feelings and not knowing what to do about them
Getting out/escaping
Safe/secure - links to relationships and attachment

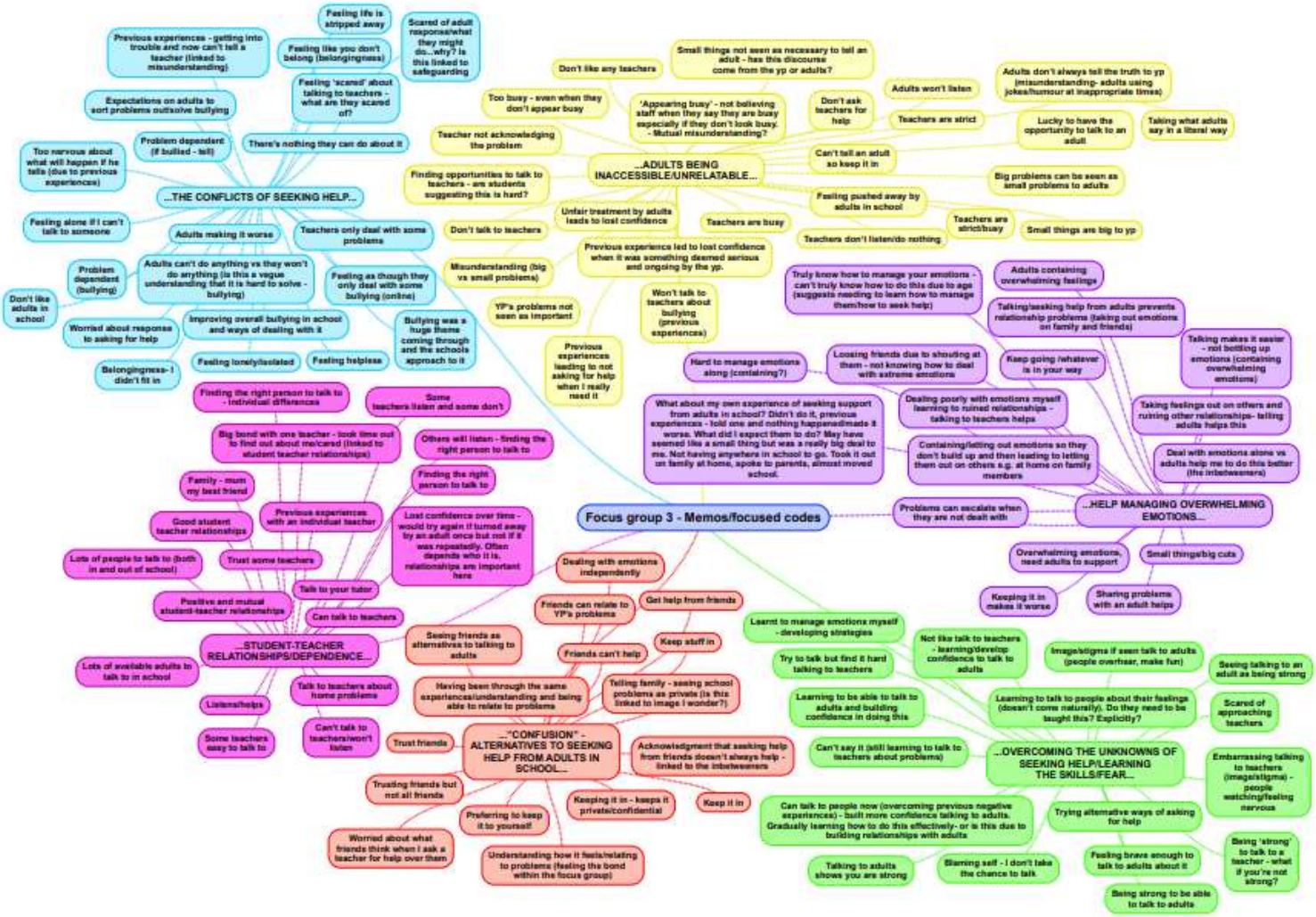
Appendix 24

Focus group 2: focused codes to theoretical categories


Focus group 2 - Memos/focused codes ➡️ theoretical categories
.....(UNREALISTIC) EXPECTATIONS THAT ADULTS UNDERSTAND YP'S PROBLEMS.....
Adults need help to understand your feelings (not telepathic) - linked to relationships as the more adults know the YP, the more likely they will understand the feelings they might be feeling
Expectations on adults (unrealistic)
Making assumptions about adults knowing how you feel
Teachers not understanding
Understanding
Perceptions of 'bad' - differences between adults and YP
Expectation that adults will be able to sort it out or solve problem
Ignoring/not acknowledging YP's feelings
Sometimes the adults don't know what to do about it/how to solve it - linked to understanding YP's problems?
Getting into trouble
Personality/individual differences
.....PROBLEM DEPENDENT.....
Later on the problem might not be so bad - process of calming down. Linked to managing immediate/overwhelming emotions that YP don't know how to deal with. Is it the problem or the emotion associated with it that they don't know how to manage?
Impacted on emotions
Problem dependent
Secret/bad
Perceptions of 'bad'
Need teacher help for 'bad' problems - what are 'bad' problems?
Keeping secrets - what are secrets?- is this linked to safeguarding
.....IMAGE (reputation).....
Private
PERSONAL
Being a 'snitch'
Image to peers
Being confidential
Being discreet
Image - more general (embarrassed/awkward)
Worried about loosing friends
Personal
Parents
Family
.....LOST CONFIDENCE DUE TO PERCEIVED LACK OF SUPPORT IN PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES.....
Feeling as though nothing gets done
Deal with problem in own way
Favouritism
Unfairness
Keep it to yourself
Nothing being done, forced to sort it out in own way
Ongoing problems not sorted out
.....MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS.....
Helpful
Adult - student relationships
Mutual relationships
Kind
Fairness
Trust
Keeping secrets
Adults telling other adults and making it worse
Mutual trust
Doing what they say they will/true to their word
.....THE INBETWEENERS.....
Emotional support from adults in school - to help work through problem or whilst you work your way through the problem?
Helping - help from an adult to solve problems
Agency
Teaching new skills
Need teacher help for 'bad' problems - what are 'bad' problems?
Dependent on adults
To solve problems

Appendix 25

Focus group 3: focused codes to theoretical categories



Appendix 26

Overall theoretical categories/findings mind map


Overall data analysis of focus groups
Theoretical categories ➡️ overarching theoretical categories
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
Student-teacher relationships/dependence
Positive student-teacher relationships
Mutual relationships
Learning to seek help
Overcoming the unknowns of seeking help/learning the skills
"Confusion" - alternatives to seeking help from an adult in school
The inbetweeners - in between wanting to be active agents in their own lives and being dependent on adults
Inbetweeners
The conflicts of seeking help
Problem dependent
The inbetweeners - in between wanting to be active agents in their own lives and being dependent on adults
Containing overwhelming feelings
Gauging the right time to talk
Containing overwhelming feelings
Help managing and containing overwhelming emotions (preventing bigger issues)
Protecting image
Protecting image - through transition to adulthood
Protecting image
Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable
Expectations that adults understand young people's problems
Unhelpful adult responses
Lost confidence due to (perceived) lack of support in previous experiences
Mutual misunderstanding

Appendix 27

SENCO 1: data analysis mind map


School 1 SENCo interview - memos
...FUTURE PRIORITIES...
Often MH issues in YP tend to escalate quickly in school - staff often miss the early signs and don't intervene early enough (SENCO gives example). Maybe they miss these early warning signs because they are prioritising education when the problem doesn't seem that significant to them?
Recognition that the lower level intervention/support is not as robust as the higher level support - perhaps this is linked with difficulties in differentiating between 'real' and 'faked' distress to avoid lessons?
Lack of preventative work - more reactive work but would like more preventative work to take place
Staff well-being- not a priority (very informal currently). This needs to be a priority if the lower level emotional support for students is a priority
...RELATIONSHIPS...
Linked to relationships, the SENCO talks about different students getting in with different staff which could be linked to individual difference and personalities.
Tailoring support (and who talks to a student) depending on their needs and who they have a relationships with
Adults apologising for their mistakes - being good role models/modelling that we all make mistakes and this is how you deal with it.
Highlights the importance of students and staff rebuilding relationships when they have gone wrong
...EDUCATION VS EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING...
Students often go to non-teaching staff during lesson time - is this due to their availability or because they feel that they are more likely to prioritise their emotional well-being over their education?
Difficulty - students turning up during lesson time. Teachers torn between supporting pupils when they need it and their education. Conflict for teachers.
Teachers face huge conflict between supporting students emotional well-being and the pressure of getting good results.
Teachers don't want to encourage students to come out of lessons to deal with problems
Time to talk - break/lunch/after school. Links with the conflict between supporting emotional well-being vs education. Also links with participants comments about adults gauging the right time to talk - sometimes this will need to be during lessons.
...STAFF DIFFERENCES...
Non-teaching staff available during the day/lessons - recognition that teachers perhaps don't have time when teaching. Have time to liaise with parents too.
Recognises that sanctions don't work yet some staff still prefer the behaviourist way of managing CYP
Highlights staff differences
Pastoral TAs are very good at managing students in times of crisis - the way they talk to them and distract them to help them calm down. Linked to relationships and being available (non-teaching staff).
Recognises that relationships are key, students may go to a TA they know well with their problems
Staff training on relevant issues ie. 2BU
Being visible is key to student support
Teachers don't realistically have time to deal with many student problems
A large amount of money is put into student support/pastoral care
Recognises the student support base as a 'safe place' as they choose to spend a lot of time in there
Links between pastoral and safeguarding- are these similar? Are these different things? Can over-lap. Do the pupils refer to this link as well?
...SCHOOL STRUCTURES...
Capacity issues for services ie. ELSA
Record keeping (partly for safeguarding purposes?)
Tutors are key to student support
Careful consideration of the support offered to students when they have a proven need. What about a non-proven need? One off emotional support?
Other support available for pupils including PFSAs and counsellors. Limited resources and outside support for students
Student support base - staffed at all times to offer support throughout the day
Staff do lots of signposting and advertise support for students - do YP recognise/notice this?
Pastoral structures and support in hierarchy throughout schools ie. head of houses
Students know they can go to their heads of house - do students feel like this or do they see them as authority and therefore don't feel comfortable turning to them for emotional support?

Appendix 28

SENCO 2: data analysis mind map


School 2 SENCo interview - memos
Acknowledges friendships in emotional well-being support - perhaps the school have a role in developing this so that if YP are going to turn to their peers, rather than an adult in school, they are more equipped to deal with it?
Sometimes a relationship with a key adult is not good enough
Promotion of emotional well-being is a whole school priority.
Students like staff to model how to do things so that they can learn to do it themselves - this links to agency but also relies on adult help to get them out of a negative behaviour pattern. Empowering them and building their confidence
Universal support - promoting emotional well-being through off timetable days and P4C. Do students remember this in a crisis, does this promote emotional well-being?
Most students still want adults to sort the problems out for them - it seems as though she is talking about problems that are out of the students control though e.g. being in a lesson with a certain teacher.
She talks about a lot of staff being available for students during break and lunch time -what about other times?
Mentions 'sense of belonging' as a way of promoting emotional well-being in school.
Staff feel that the students have plenty of places they can go if they are feeling a bit overwhelmed or need some support.
The pastoral staff have their emotions in check, can be non-judgemental, good listeners and guiding them to find their own solutions, rather than telling them what to do (links to agency/inbetweeners).
Adults being adults (good emotional literacy and well-being themselves)
Being able to detach from other emotions or things going on at home
SENCO recognises that they need to improve their universal/whole school level support and promotion of emotional well-being.
Safe spaces around school - these are allocated by the staff though. Have students had any input into where these safe spaces are or what they are like?
Student perceptions that teachers don't like them (sometimes due to their self-perception or self-esteem).this could link with students misunderstanding adults in school.
Lots of staff training and use of emotion coaching in school -to develop universal support to reach those pupils they are unaware of who may need support.
Pastoral support hierarchy, from universal level support to more specialist.
Looked at this year through an audit to identify the gaps in emotional well-being support
ELSA, PFSA, school counsellors, EP training - lots of specialist support available. Access to these? Mainly referred through other staff rather than self-referred.
Lots of small groups e.g. bereavement group and eating disorder group.
Staff awareness of who is on the SEN register - what about the ones who aren't on the SEN register that needs additional emotional support. Do the staff know about these pupils?
Signposting for students and parents -much of this is available on their school website (do pupils know this and refer to this at all?)
The school also have links to more specialist services e.g. 2BU and CAMHS.
Staff that don't see promoting and supporting the students emotional well-being are often the ones who have difficulties managing their own well-being. Or a lack of confidence in staff to carry out this kind of support. Does this come down to training? Or is this down to individual differences?
She mentions that staff sometimes misunderstand what a student needs or doesn't have the confidence to support YP and fear that they may get it wrong (or maybe make it worse) - link with adults not wanting to talk about suicide as this may encourage them to complete suicide (the evidence does not support this).
See tutors as first point of contact - good links with parents. This could like to relationships -do the students go to their tutor first though?
Recognises individual difference and personalities in student-staff relationships
Some students would struggle to understand the concept of emotional well-being and therefore not understand it when staff are trying to promote it in school
Already have buddy and mentoring systems, transition work etc.
The SENCo feels that the school could be doing more to promote emotional well-being for students
Nothing currently in place in the school to support staff emotional well-being. Awareness that some staff look after their emotional well-being better than others. The school have considered it but not taken it any further at the moment. Staff are overloaded with work, have young families and other stressors which can lead to them not being in a good place emotionally themselves.
Link/key workers and 5 trusted adults in school highlights how they see relationships between students and staff as important. This appears to be mainly for SEN students though. What about those who the staff are unaware of their emotional needs?
Students value having staff they can talk to in school and sometimes if that member of staff isn't there, then they have a bad time. Links back to relationships being key again.

Appendix 29

SENCO 3: data analysis mind map


School 3 SENCo interview memos
Different places to seek help depending on needs of yp ie. if on SEN register they can go to the hub.
Doesn't think students recognise what the school does to promote/support emotional well-being. This could link with misunderstanding. The SENCo started that this aspect of education perhaps isn't made explicit enough - perhaps this is why the misunderstanding is occurring?
Sees 'being listened to' as the main thing important to young people
Couldn't think of what CYP would say helps them when they seek support from adults for their emotional well-being other than 'being listened to'. I had to dig to get any more on this question which perhaps shows that adults don't really know what CYP want from adults in order to helpful support their emotional well-being in school. This is where my research is helpful. Links with misunderstanding.
As well as adults take CYP serious and act on what they say they will
Acknowledges time as a problem for staff not to promote/support student emotional well-being
SENCo feels as though more could be done in school to support/promote student emotional well-being. What are the underlying barriers to this? What do the students think about this?
SENCo very confident that students know who they can talk to and where to go in school if they need support
Staff who make time to get to know students as individuals are therefore better at noticing when a CYP might need support - this links with relationships and clearly recognises this as important.
See experienced staff as those who might identify CYP who might need some additional emotional support more than teachers who are less experienced.
Believes all staff see the emotional well-being of their students as a priority- do the students feel this way?
Recognises that staff may have a lack of knowledge themselves about what is available to support/promote student emotional well-being. This suggests a training need, staff avoidance, possible staff well-being issues.
Doesn't think students know what emotional well-being is and what this term means.
Acknowledges staff are stressed - yet their well-being is not catered for
Teachers don't have the time they need to support students in school
Academic pressures on young people
Acknowledges that CYP need to be given a choice/options about who they go and seek help from in school.
Non teaching staff appointed to pastoral leader roles who have more time.
Considers that some yp are good at seeking out help and some not so good - why is this? Is this because of staff/previous experiences or just individual differences?
Staff well-being not a priority in school but recent survey so it has been considered. Is it surprising some staff opt out of providing emotional well-being support to students?
Feeling inadequate
Recognises increase in MH needs especially anxiety
Acknowledges that relationships are key ie, some students will go to their keyworker in school for emotional support due to this relationship.
Identity issues
Acknowledges social media as causing problems like anxiety for example.
Also acknowledge individual differences between staff.
Started opening up and talking more when we started discussing staff well-being and the pressures staff are under. This perhaps suggests that staff generally feel as though their well-being isn't well supported despite the level of stress they are all under in education nowadays.
Feels the school could be doing more to make staff aware of their responsibilities around support students' emotional well-being and mental health which suggests that she thinks some staff still don't see it as their role. This conflicts with one of her previous comments but fits in with the some of the ideas of the young people. Linked to role of teachers/misunderstanding.

Appendix 30

Overall SENCO interview data analysis mind map


SENCo Interviews - overarching themes
...BARRIERS...
STAFF DIFFERENCES
Teaching staff have less time than pastoral staff for supporting emotional well-being
Some prefer behaviourist approach
Lack of experience
Some are less aware of students emotional needs
Staff seeing student emotional well-being as a priority
EDUCATION VS EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
Internal and external pressures on teachers
Conflict for teachers
Opportunities for students to talk to adults: break times, after school
Staff stress/lack of time
Adults lacking confidence
Some students better at seeking help than others
Staff with poor emotional well-being
Lack of awareness of students emotional well-being needs
Student perceptions that staff don't like them (linked to self esteem)
YP's understanding of emotional well-being
Individual differences/personalities
...FUTURE PRIORITIES...
Raising staff awareness of their roles/responsibly in supporting emotional well-being
Developing staff (emotional) well-being
Develop YP's awareness of what emotional well-being means and be explicit when promoting it
Improve universal level support for emotional well-being
Promoting early identification and intervention
Developing staff knowledge on how they can support YP and resources available
Promoting emotional well-being
Preventative work
...FACILITATING FACTORS...
Sense of belonging in school
Some students better at seeking help than others
Pastoral staff
Good listening skills
Dependence on adults
In check with own emotions
Empowering
Modelling
Experience - helped early identification
Non-judgemental
Individual differences/personalities
Students need a choice who to seek help from
Staff taking time to get to know students
Understanding of the reasons YP seek help e.g. anxiety, academic pressures, feeling inadequate, identity issues, social media
Students want adult to take them seriously and 'act on it'
Staff seeing student emotional well-being as a priority
RELATIONSHIPS
Tailor emotional support to individuals
Preferred adult
Student-teacher relationships
Good relationships help with early identification
Students' friendships offering emotional support
Repairing and rebuilding relationships
...GRADUATED RESPONSE TO EMOTIONAL SUPPORT...
Different places for those with differing needs e.g. those with SEND can go to the hub
SEND pupils given key workers
Pastoral support hierarchy
Support base staffed by non-teaching staff
Staff and places in school YP can seek help
Those with identified needs have carefully considered emotional support
Tutors key in emotional support
Staff available at break/lunch time
Signposting to external services/agencies/organisations
Interventions often required referrals from staff rather than being self referral services
Universal emotional support less robust (financial and resources restraints)
Links with safeguarding structures
Universal level support: emotion coaching, buddying/mentoring systems
Interventions e.g. ELSA, school counsellors
Universal and more specific support
Safe places (identified by staff)
Support around transition

Appendix 31

Excerpt from reflective journal

10.11.17	Heard back from supervisor regarding participants. This led me to consider my main focus of my study which is characteristics. Looking back at the Lindsey and Kalafat (1998) study, this helped me clarify my participants and the role of the SENCO interview. In their study, they looked at the characteristics but also the organisation of the school to facilitate these characteristics. The SENCO interview will help clarify the organisation of emotional support for pupils and help triangulate the findings from pupils. I am going to get the pupil researchers to help design the interview questions and considered letting the pupils run this interview but decided against it. Not only will it involve more of the pupil researchers time but it may make the SENCO being uncomfortable. For now, I will leave it as me interviewing the SENCO.
12.01.18	GT book ch. 2 ideas for analysing documents- school pastoral policies 1. What it's originators intended to accomplish 2. Process of producing- how/who 3. What/who does it affect 4. How various audiences interpret it 5. How, when and to what extent these audiences use the document 6. Purpose- what does it explain/justify/foretell actions 7. What does it not say 8. Compare/contrast with wider documents eg. SEND CoP
22.01.18	Read article - made me consider asking what they think emotional well-being is as the article suggests this impacts help-seeking behaviour.
09.02.18	Fg question: who pupils turn to for support with their emotional well-being? To identify the range of staff. My study only captures the voices of those who have sought help and doesn't gain the views of those who don't seek help.
23.02.18	Consider how YP are going to understand final codes/categories when checking the data with them. Perhaps only share initial codes or maybe use child-friendly language in focused codes/categories. Think about FG questions....what emotions do they seek help for? What do they not seek help for? Why?
09.03.18	'Member-checking' this is where findings/categories are checked with participants. There is lots of literature on this. Emotional well-being links with mental health and early identification. Chosen not to use the term mental health as it might put participants/parents off taking part.
16.05.18	Met pupil researchers. SENCO has encouraged vulnerable pupils to take part rather than any YP. Discuss this with next SENCO. Would you rather game was a good ice breaker. Look up who children often

	disclose safeguarding info to - is it often school staff? Limitation of my study - lack of ethnic groups.

Appendix 32

Example of memos

Memo – 3rd Oct 2018

Developing theoretical categories from focused codes (FG2) – Theoretical category **unrealistic expectations on adults** - led me to consider that as adults seeking mental health support we don't assume professionals/friends will understand without us explaining how we feel to them. Do YP assume adults know and understand or are they not explaining how they feel because they are unable to articulate it. Is this related to their undeveloped pre-frontal cortex? Perhaps this is more of a **mutual misunderstanding**, YP assume adults know what the problem is and how to resolve it and adults are expecting YP to explain how they are feeling and the support they need without giving them the skills to be able to do this. Emily talked about expecting teachers to notice when she has arrived in their classroom but is emotionally distressed, this appears to be an acknowledgement that she needs support from adults to help contain her emotions and can't always ask for this help herself.

Memo – January 11th 2019

Developing theoretical categories from focused codes (FG3) – Theoretical category **mutual misunderstanding** – the YP in FG3 talked about adults not understanding in terms of them being unavailable, not seeing some problems as necessary to seek help for and being lucky to have the opportunity to speak to an adult when experiencing difficulties. Is this category more about **accessibility** of staff? Or staff unable to **relate** to the problems of these YP? Perhaps in some cases it is both. This is clearly a key barrier to these YP seeking help. How can this be overcome? Does this link back to the positive relationships the YP have with key staff? Would this misunderstanding still be there with staff who have attuned relationships with them? This category highlights the YP's reliance on adults still, despite their strive to be independent.

Appendix 33

Feedback to schools and Feedback to young people

Feedback to schools (adults)

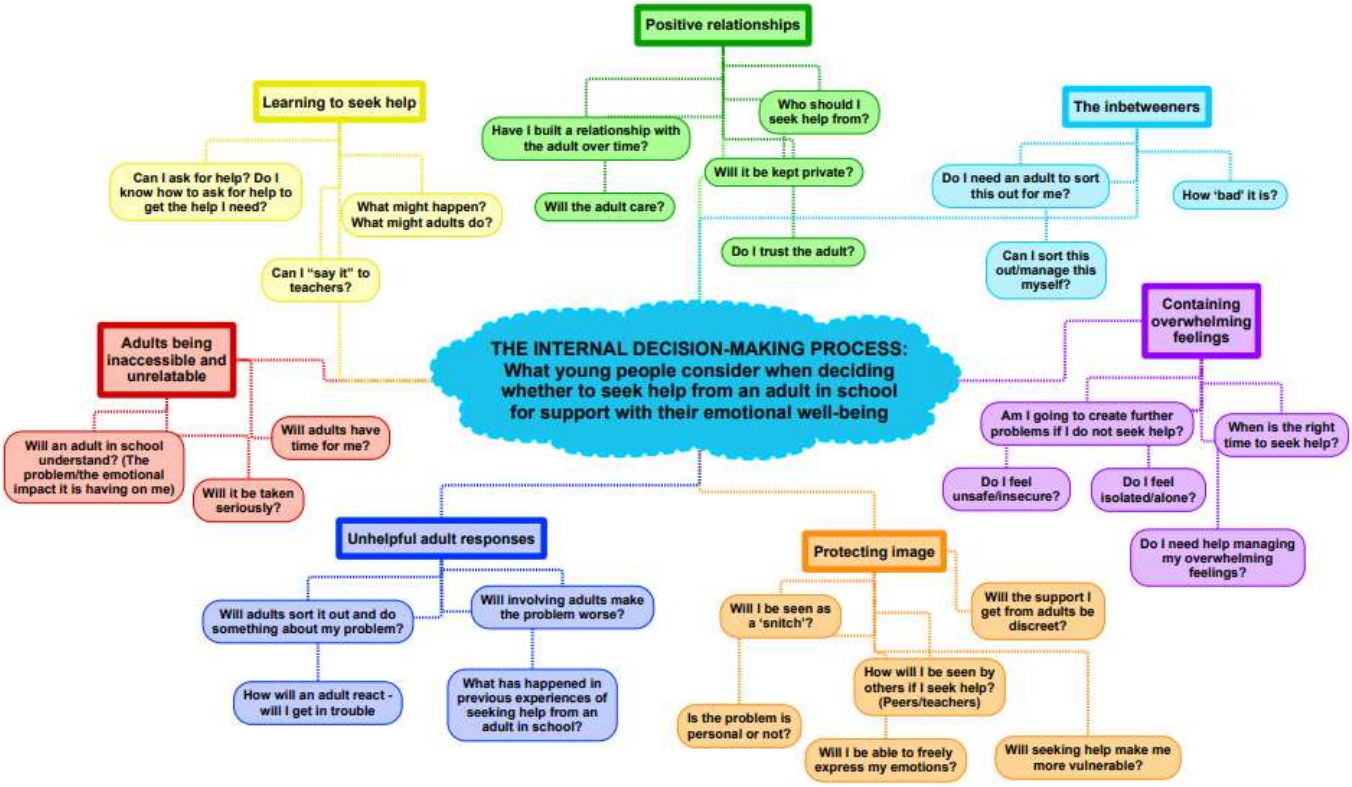
"It's not that big of a problem...so we're not going to do anything."

An inclusive grounded theory study exploring the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents in school for their emotional well-being.

Originally, the purpose of this study was to uncover pupil's perceptions of the helpful and unhelpful characteristics of staff when they seek support for their emotional well-being in school. It aimed to highlight the perceived barriers and facilitators for pupils accessing support from school staff.

With the increasing prevalence of mental health conditions in children and young people in the UK (Green et al, 2004; Children's Society, 2008) and with young people spending a significant amount of their time in educational settings (King, Strunk and Sorter, 2010; Anderson and Graham, 2016; Rutter et al, 1979; Dryfoos, 1994), this research aimed to identify what could promote adolescents seeking help from adults in school.

This was an inclusive piece of research whereby I trained two pupil researchers across the three participating schools to facilitate focus groups with young people from your school. A grounded



theory methodology was used which allowed for the research to go in the direction the young people chose to take it. Supplementary data in the form of interviews with the school SENCOs and an analysis of relevant school policies was also carried out in order to compare this with the views of your students.

The key finding from the focus groups is that young people go through a complex and internal decision-making process when deciding whether to seek help from an adult in school for their emotional well-being. The model below shows this process:

The seven key categories young people considered are explained in more detail below:

- ***Positive relationships***

  This consideration was around whether the YP had a trusted adult they felt comfortable seeking help from in school. This was required to be a reciprocal relationship with a preferred adult which had developed over time.

- ***The inbetweeners***

  This category highlighted the continuum, and YP's conflict, between being dependent on adults and their strive to be independent, active agents. Being 'in-between' a child and an adult leading to confusions around whether to seek help.

- ***Containing overwhelming feelings***

  YP consider whether they can manage their overwhelming emotions independently or whether they needed support to avoid creating additional problems for themselves. Often this depended on the type and strength of the emotion the YP were experiencing.

- ***Protecting image***

  The YP consider around how they will be seen by others when seeking help. They have concerns around whether adult support will be discreet and how it will impact on their reputation and social networks.

- ***Unhelpful adult responses***

  Concerns that adults will either not resolve a YP's problem, have little impact or will make the problem worse was a key consideration for the YP. This was often based upon previous experiences or socially constructed discourses.

- ***Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable***

  Whether an adult would take YP seriously and be able to relate to a YP's problem or emotional need was a common concern for the YP. The YP also questioned whether adults in school have time for them and want to support their emotional well-being.

- ***Learning to seek help***

  The YP had fears over what might happen if they seek help from adults in school. Equally this category highlights YP's concerns over whether they could communicate their emotional needs adequately.

The table below highlights what the young people reported to help and hinder their help-seeking behaviours in school for their emotional well-being:

Category	What hinders help-seeking?	What helps help-seeking?
Positive relationships	Lack of positive relationships with adults in school	A positive relationship with an adult in school
The inbetweeners	Wanting to resolve a problem independently	Adults guiding YP to resolve problems themselves with support
Containing overwhelming feelings	Being overwhelmed by the intensity of an emotion	Adults supporting YP to manage an overwhelming emotion leading to feeling safe
Protecting image	Help-seeking that leads to damaged reputations or breakdowns in peer relationships	Adults providing discreet support to YP and acknowledging their need to protect their image
Unhelpful adult responses	Adults not resolving YP's problems or having a lack of impact when they do become involved	Adults taking YP's problems seriously and dealing with them according to school systems and policies
Adults being inaccessible and unrelatable	When adults are inaccessible e.g. too busy, or cannot relate to adolescent problems	Adults are available and can relate to YP's problems and emotions
Learning to seek help	Adults assuming that YP know how to seek help and YP's fears of what might happen	Adults teaching YP how to seek help and helping them overcome the unknowns

<u>Comparing the young people's views to the views of the SENCOs and school policies</u>

This part of the research highlighted the difference in views between the young people, the SENCOs and the information documented in the school policies. It also aims to illustrate the importance of listening and responding to the views of the young people.

The tables below show some of the key similarities and differences:

Similarities and differences between YP's views and SENCO's views

Similarities	Differences
• They both acknowledged the role of **positive relationships** • They acknowledged that YP want to be **empowered** • They identified that teachers do not have enough **time**	• The SENCOs did not acknowledge **bullying** as a key cause of poor emotional well-being in school • Differing **priorities** between student emotional well-being and academic achievement • The SENCOs highlighted **poor staff emotional well-being** as a concern

Similarities and differences between the SENCO views and school policies

Similarities	Differences
• Both refer to **preventative work**	• SENCOs discuss **pastoral support** resources whereas the policies do not detail this

Similarities between YP's views and school policies

Similarities	Differences
• The policies in school 1 identified **positive relationships** as important	• Differences in how **bullying** is dealt with in school • Focuses on **behaviour management** systems • Highlights relevant **legislation** • Clarifies **roles and responsibilities** of staff

The findings indicated some next steps for schools and EPs in terms of informing policy and improving practice to encourage more young people seek support for their emotional well-being in the future. This is in line with Government initiatives around promoting early intervention for mental health and wellbeing in children and young people.

Next steps for schools and EPs:

- Prioritising and encouraging the development of positive student-teacher relationships. Time should be allocated to allow these relationships to develop and schools need to accommodate YP going to their preferred adult in school for emotional well-being support.
- Schools should used evidence-based approaches e.g. scaffolding and emotion coaching, to empower young people to be able to independently resolve their difficulties in the future whilst teaching that help-seeking does not impede their independence.

- Schools need to prioritise young people's emotional well-being needs over their education. They should provide a safe place for young people to express their emotions and ensure they have access to non-judgemental adult support.
- Adults in school need to acknowledge young people's sensitivity to being emotionally exposed and embarrassed in front of their peers. They require discreet adult support and privacy to express their emotions without damaging their reputations.
- Staff need training to give them the confidence and skill to support young people's emotional well-being and help them resolve young people's problems. Staff also require support for their own emotional well-being.
- Schools should collaborate with young people to co-produce anti-bullying policies and ensure that all adults know how to respond to bullying in line with this policy.
- School should develop universal support systems to support student's emotional well-being needs. Again, young people should be involved in this process and EPs can assist with this. Primarily. These systems should ensure that adults in school are psychologically assessible to young people.
- Schools should co-produce a school policy and 'learning to seek help' curriculum with students in order to explicitly teach help-seeking skills in relation to young people's emotional well-being. Current school policies should also document current pastoral practices in place where relevant.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank you for participating in this study. The young people from your school who took part in the study truly showed their abilities to helpfully contribute to research.

Thank you

Kelly Osborne

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Feedback to young people

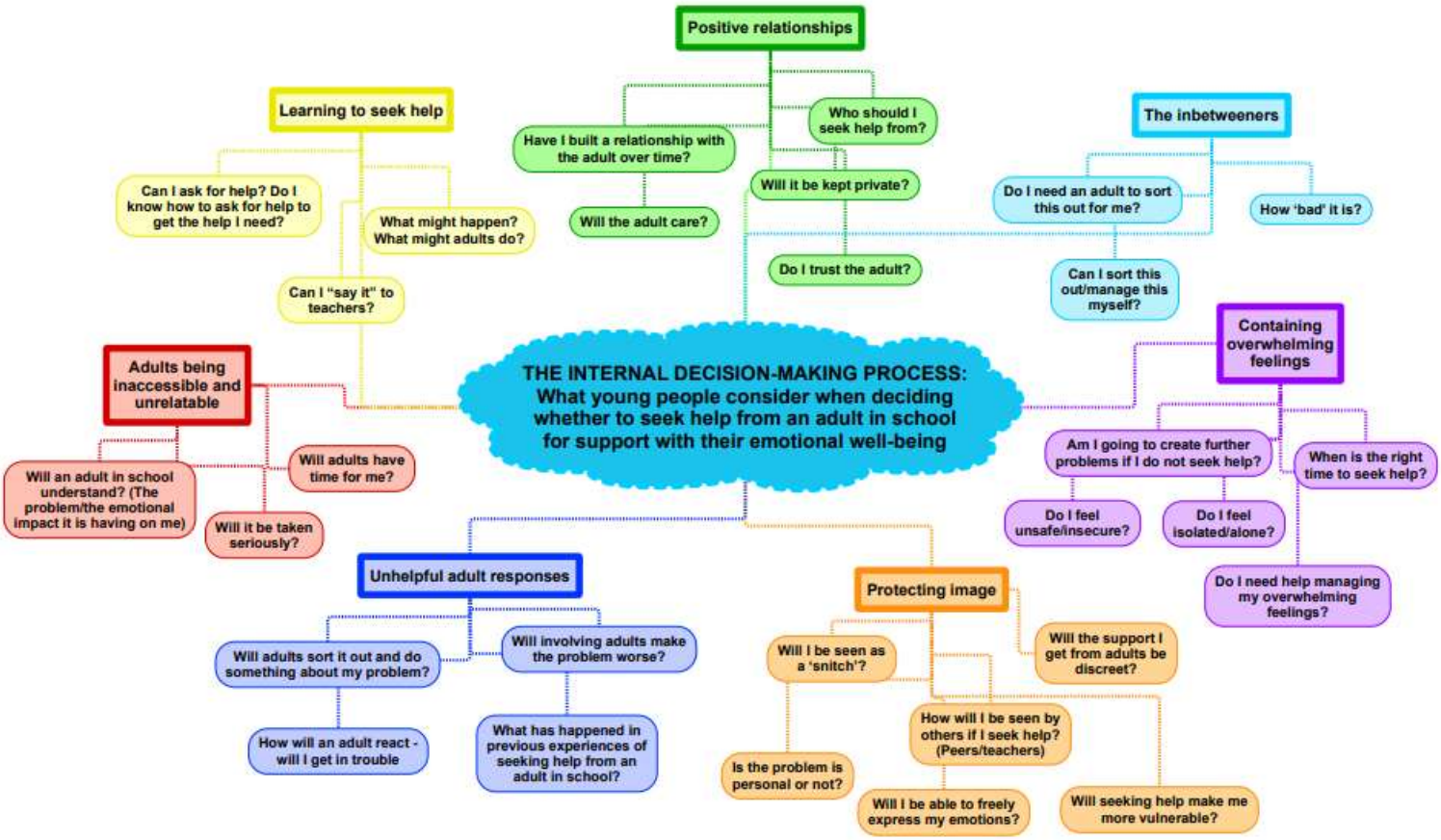
"It's not that big of a problem...so we're not going to do anything."

An inclusive grounded theory study exploring the help-seeking behaviours of adolescents in school for their emotional well-being.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking part in this research study. Without your contributions I would not have been able to find out what helps you and makes it tricky for you when you seek hep from adults in school for your emotions.

In this research study, I was interested in finding out what pupils think is helpful and unhelpful when they go to an adult in school for help when they are struggling with their emotions.

I found that young people find it hard to make a decision about whether to seek help from an adult in school or not. The diagram below shows all of the things you think about before making a decision.



I also interviewed your school SENCO and looked at some of your school policies. I found lots of differences between your views on help-seeking for your emotions in school and the views of your SENCOs in school and the school policies.

I have written this study up and have told your school what we found out. I have suggested some next steps for schools and Educational Psychologists, like me. These include:

- Schools listening to the views of their students more
- Students helping the adults make some important school policies
- Adults in school should have some extra training to learn more about the difficulties of being a teenager and how they can best help you

- Educational Psychologists helping schools to make help-seeking for your emotional well-being easier.

It was important to me to hear your views on this topic.

Thank you

Kelly Osborne

Trainee Educational Psychologist